

# THE PROGRESSIVE CYNIC

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## A Look at the Post-Climate Change Globe

BY JSAGER99 APRIL 24, 2014 CLIMATE CLIMATE SCIENCE ENVIRONMENT GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS REGULATION

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The scientific community has long been in agreement that anthropogenic climate change is real, dangerous, and unavoidable unless drastic steps are taken by humanity as a whole. If humanity continues down the current path of reckless dirty energy use, we will inflict irreparable damage to our planet's climate that will haunt coming generations.



### PHOTOS



Global climate change will cause a host of problems, including, but not limited to, sea level rise, extreme weather events, unpredictable weather patterns, droughts/wildfire dangers, food shortages, water conflicts, and the forced displacement of entire populations (ex. Southeast Asian islanders whose islands get swallowed up by the sea).

Unfortunately, a combination of politics, religion, and shortsighted corporate greed has blocked any attempts by the US government to address climate change in any meaningful way:

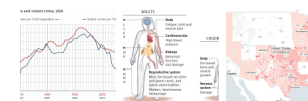
- Many powerful corporate interests have a vested economic interest in blocking attempts to address climate change—they make money by selling polluting petrochemicals, supplying the extraction industry with materials, or utilizing dirty energy to make their own products. As any attempts to address climate change will necessarily disrupt these interests and reduce their profits, they have thrown their considerable power behind anybody who will sustain the status quo.
- Christian conservatives in the United States reflexively disbelieve science and are under the delusion that god will prevent any climate catastrophe from afflicting humanity (after all, they believe that he promised never to flood the earth again).
- Ignorant Americans are often unable to assess the dangers of an issue as large and complex as climate change thus have been distracted by issues which are more acute (ex. worrying about earning the next paycheck rather than the danger of a super-storm a decade in the future).

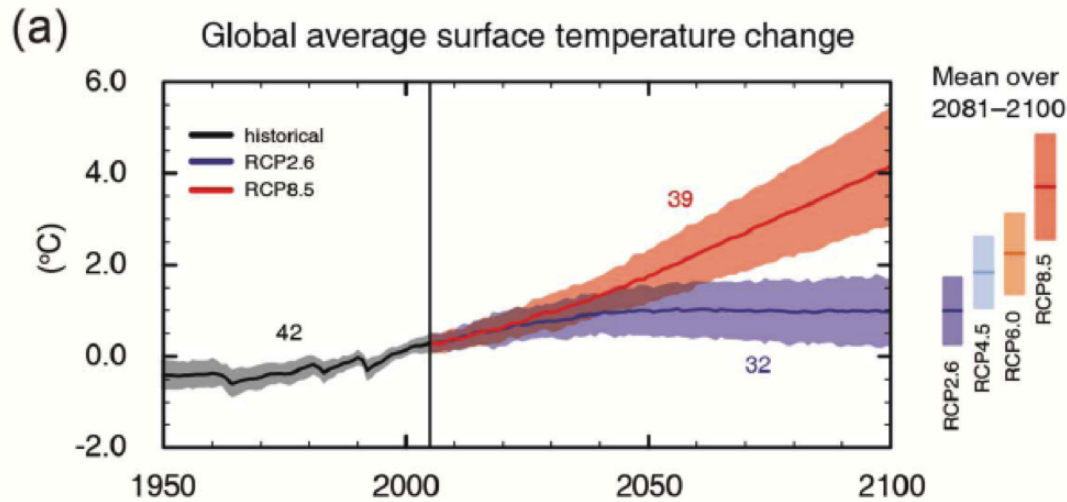
Ultimately, the greedy, religious and ignorant interests which fight against climate change mitigation policies have captured a large portion of the American political landscape and have made it virtually impossible to pass any reform.

It is rapidly becoming apparent that future generations will inherit a far more dangerous earth than we did and that there is little recourse until the American people are shaken awake by an extreme event (ex. Miami being erased from the map by a cat. 5 super-storm)

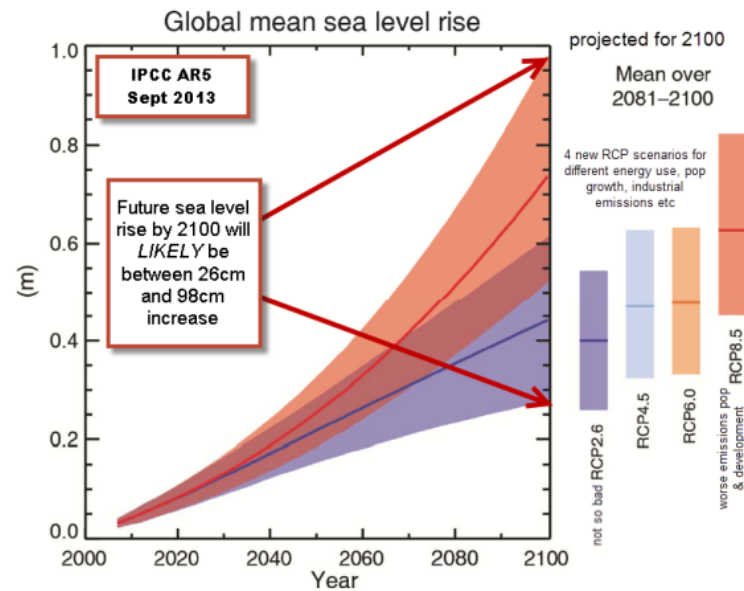
## The New World

According to the fifth International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, the average global temperature could increase by over 4.5 degrees Celsius by 2100 if humanity refuses to address climate change and continues down the current path.





This increase in temperature would result in average sea level rising by as much as a meter by the end of the century.



While this situation may be difficult for most laypeople to conceptualize, any scientist will look at that increase with **EXTREME** worry for the future of humanity. If this trend continues, we will end up melting ocean and land ice to the point where we flood the entire planet.

To put this increase in perspective to the average American, National Geographic created projections of future maps if we continue warming the planet to the point where the polar ice disappears:















Keep in mind that these maps are extreme illustrations of the consequences of climate change—they illustrate meters of sea level rise that would require a 20 degree increase in the global average temperature. While global warming is an exponential process (increasing in speed as it progresses), this type of sea level rise would still take several centuries to occur.

That said, an increase in sea level that is even a fraction of what is shown in these maps would be devastating to large portions of the country. If sea level increased by even a few feet, major cities would be rendered uninhabitable, trillions of dollars would be lost, and innumerable Americans would be forcibly displaced. In addition to the obvious issue of cities being submerged in the ocean, significant increases in sea level would open new regions of the world to even more extreme storm activity (ex. stronger hurricanes in the US and larger typhoons in Southeast Asia) and would strain potable water resources well beyond a sustainable point.

## **Conclusion**

Fortunately, we still have some time to correct our environmental mistakes and prevent a truly catastrophic climate shift from occurring. While it is essentially impossible to mitigate all of the consequences of our past

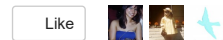
mistakes, swift action can ensure that those consequences don't transition from extremely costly to catastrophic.

In order to address climate change, we must immediately begin researching advanced carbon-neutral energy sources and rapidly shifting our current energy infrastructure towards the best non-polluting sources currently available (including nuclear, solar, hydroelectric, geothermal, and wind). Dirty energy use must be disincentivized on an international scale and humanity must learn that the simple fact that having the capacity to extract energy from the ground doesn't necessarily mean that it is a good idea to do so—that energy may be relatively cheap to the consumer, but the hidden costs are shifted onto humanity as a whole.

If we refuse to address climate change, we will condemn future generations to a world filled with conflict and upheaval. Entire regions will have their geographies altered, resources disrupted, and populations displaced in ways that would foment widespread international conflict. The scale and severity of this global conflict would be unprecedented in the history of humanity and there is no way to estimate the full extent of the damage that would be done.

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## 2 thoughts on "A Look at the Post-Climate Change Globe"



Oscar

MAY 6, 2014 AT 2:02 AM [REPLY](#)

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It's hard to come by educated people on this topic, but you seem like you know what you're talking about!  
Thanks

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