

# Collected Essays VII

June 22, 2023

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# Avoiding Climate Disaster: Our Last Chance?

**29 April 2023** The most recent IPCC report:

<https://countercurrents.org/2023/04/2023-ipcc-ar6-summary-for-policymakers-last-warning/?swcfpc=1>

<https://popularresistance.org/ipcc-this-is-the-make-or-break-decade-for-climate-action/>

<https://popularresistance.org/does-climate-inaction-violate-human-rights/>

<https://countercurrents.org/2023/04/making-sense-of-the-latest-ipcc-report-2023/?swcfpc=1>

The report states that globally,

approximately 3.3 to 3.6 billion people live in contexts that are highly vulnerable to climate change.

Increasing weather and climate extreme events have exposed millions of people to acute food insecurity and reduced water insecurity, with the largest adverse impacts observed in many locations and/or communities in Africa, Asia, Central and South America, [Less Developed Countries], Small Islands and the Arctic, and globally for Indigenous Peoples, small-scale food producers and low-income households.

Climate change has caused substantial damages, and increasingly irreversible losses, in terrestrial, freshwater, cryospheric, and coastal and open ocean ecosystems.

## **The love of money is the root of all evil. (Timothy, 6:10)**

Individuals can, of course, act to reduce their carbon footprint. They can travel only when it is absolutely necessary, go over to a plant-based diet, and so on. However, the major changes needed to save the earth from catastrophic climate change must be made by governments; and governments consistently give a higher priority to economics than to saving the earth from a climate catastrophe. Why?

Firstly, governments are controlled by money (the root of all evil).

Secondly, the threatened climate catastrophe requires immediate and drastic action, but it is unfolding on a much longer time-scale.

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2021/11/Money-and-Politics-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2022/09/Steps-Towards-Avoiding-a-Climate-Catastrophe-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

<https://eacpe.org/app/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Our-World-is-Burning-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## **The Worlds Largest Greenhouse Gas Emitters**

Despite promises made at each COP climate conference, the Keeling Curve, which registers carbon dioxide concentrations in our atmosphere, keeps increasing, indicating that the nations of the world have by no means stopped emitting greenhouse gases. On the contrary, they are emitting these gases in record amounts. Which countries are the worlds largest greenhouse gas emitters? Here is a list:

1. China with more than 10.1 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> released

per year.

2. United States, with 5.4 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub>
3. India, with 2.7 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub>
4. Russia, with 1.7 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub>
5. Japan, 1.2 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub>

## **The Chinese Government May Find It Difficult to Stop Burning Coal**

In China, the amazing rate of economic growth has lifted the population out of poverty. This economic growth is driven by energy derived from fossil fuels, especially from coal. The Chinese government would like to reduce the countrys use of fossil fuels and go over to renewable energy sources, but is finding it difficult to do so.

<https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-what-does-chinas-coal-push-mean-for-its-climate-goals/>

## **The Ecological Impact of Militarism**

<https://eacpe.org/app/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/The-Ecological-Impact-of-Militarism-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

Here is a quotation from an article by Lorah Steichen and Lindsay Koshgarian:

In this report, we lay out how militarism and the climate crisis are deeply intertwined and mutually reinforcing. The military itself is a huge polluter and is often deployed to sustain the very extractive industries that destabilize our climate. This climate crisis, in turn, leads to massive displacement, militarized borders. And the prospect of further conflict. True climate solutions, we argue, must have antimilitarism at their core.

## Warnings from the Poles

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2022/01/Warnings-from-the-Poles.pdf>

<https://www.commondreams.org/news/scary-study-glacier-retreat-rates>

Diagonal cracks have been observed in Antarctica's enormous Thwaites Glacier, and scientists fear that it might shatter into small pieces like a windscreen. They also fear that the loss of Thwaites Glacier might trigger the collapse of other nearby glaciers, thus leading to a sea level rise of several meters.

The World Meteorological Organization has confirmed a temperature record of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, measured in the Siberian town of Verkhoyansk, 70 kilometers north of the Arctic Circle. A spokesman said that such temperatures were more appropriate for the Mediterranean than for the Arctic. High Arctic temperatures are driving wildfires in the region, as well as permafrost melting, both of which put more carbon into the atmosphere.

## Another Thing That Individual Citizens Can and Must Do

We mentioned above that individuals can reduce their carbon footprints by such measures as traveling only when absolutely necessary, or going over to a plant-based diet. But if we are to avoid a climate disaster, individual citizens must also put pressure on their governments to give a higher priority to immediate and drastic climate action than to the economy. This must be the central issue in every election!



## Feedback Loops

A positive feedback loop is a self-amplifying phenomenon. A positive feedback loop occurs in nature when the product of a reaction leads to an increase in that reaction. In the context of climate change, an important example of a feedback loop is the albedo effect. Albedo is defined as the ability of a surface to reflect light. Scientists worry that the loss of Arctic sea ice, which formerly reflected the sun's rays, will be replaced by dark ocean water that will absorb the sun's heat. This effect is self-amplifying, because warmer oceans will melt more ice and increase the area of dark ocean water. Another example of a feedback loop is the thawing of Arctic permafrost, which releases the powerful greenhouse gas, methane, into the atmosphere, producing further warming and further melting in a vicious circle.

The methane hydrate feedback loop involves vast quantities of the powerful greenhouse gas methane,  $\text{CH}_4$ , frozen in a crystalline form surrounded by water molecules. 10,000 gigatons of methane hydrates are at present locked in Arctic tundra or the continental shelves of the world's oceans. Although oceans warm very slowly because of thermal inertia, the long-term dangers from the initiation of a methane hydrate feedback loop are very great. There is a danger that a very large-scale anthropogenic extinction event could be initiated unless immediate steps are taken to drastically reduce the release of greenhouse gases. The worrying thing about the methane hydrate feedback loop is the enormous amount of carbon in the form of hydrate crystals. 10,000 gigatons, most of it on the continental shelves of oceans. This is greater than the amount of carbon in all other forms that might potentially enter our atmosphere.

The need for immediate and drastic climate action is

largely due to the danger that feedback loops may be initiated, due to which global warming will continue regardless of human actions.

## **What Will Happen if We Fail?**

If we fail to control catastrophic climate change, then, in the long run, most parts of the world will become uninhabitable, starting with tropical regions, and low lying areas which will be drowned by sea level rise. Very many plants and animal species will become extinct. I believe that humans will not necessarily become extinct. because there will still be a few regions of the world where life is still possible. However, the global population of humans will be greatly reduced. One can also predict that violent conflicts will occur as people compete for the few regions where life is still possible.

Hopefully, the grimness of this scenario will spur our efforts to avoid a climate disaster.

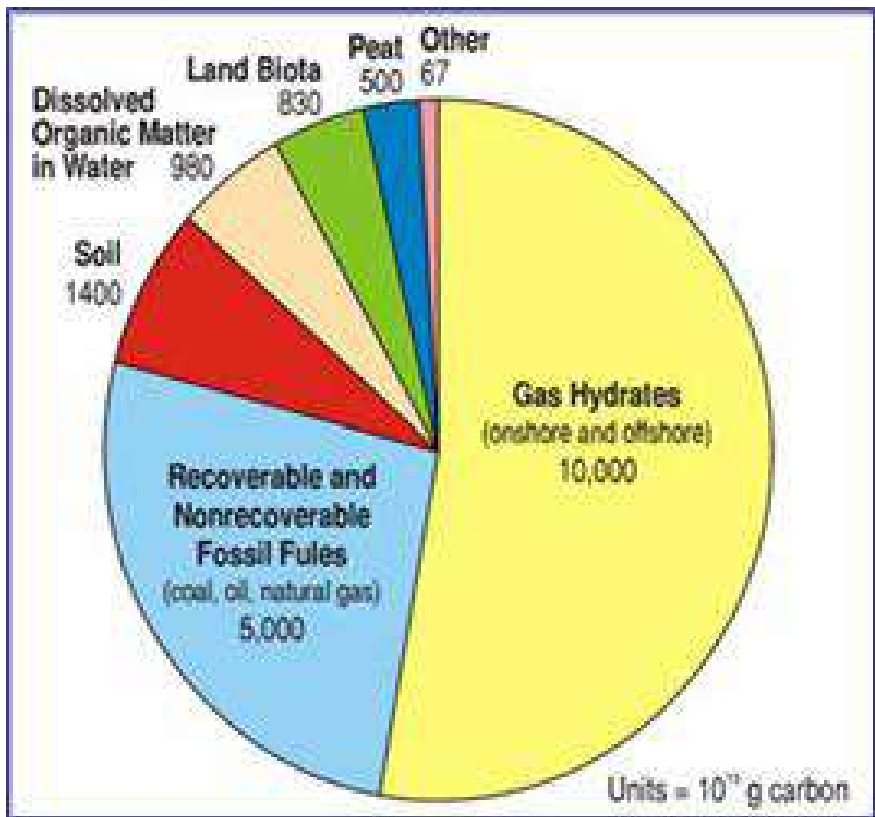


Figure 1: The worrying thing about the methane/hydrate feedback loop is the enormous amount of carbon in the form of hydrate crystals, 10,000 gigatons most of it on the continental shelves of oceans. This greater than the amount of carbon in all other forms that might potentially enter the earth's atmosphere.



Figure 2: When ocean temperatures rise, methane hydrate crystals become unstable, and methane gas bubbles up to ocean surfaces.

## Climate Feedbacks

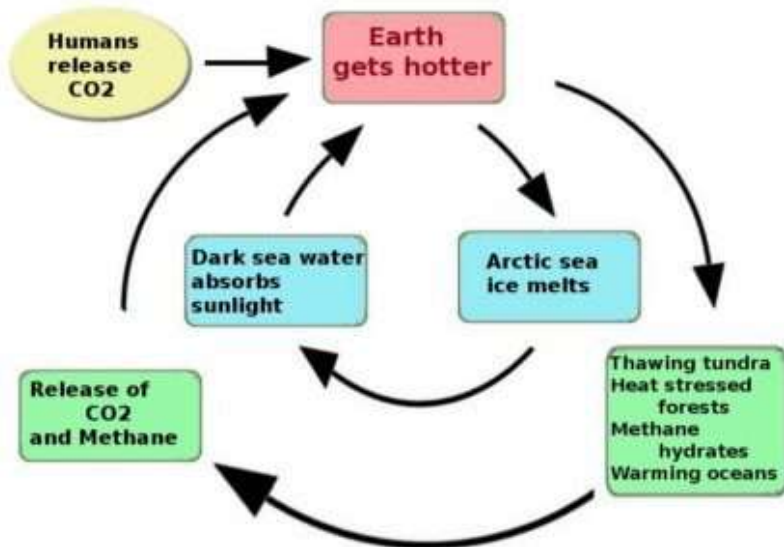


Figure 3: This diagram shows two important feedback loops, one involving the albedo effect, and the other involving methane hydrates.

# Secrecy Versus Democracy:

## New Developments

### **A Government with Many Secrets Is Not a Democracy**

What are we to think when governments make every effort to keep their actions secret from their own citizens? We can only conclude that although they may call themselves democracies, such governments are in fact oligarchies or dictatorships. In a democracy, the citizens must control the actions of their government. If they are unable to do so because those actions are secret, then any claim to democratic government is lost.

Many governments have agencies for performing undercover operations (usually very dirty ones). We can think, for example, of the KGB, the CIA, M5, or Mossad. How can countries that have such agencies claim to be democracies, when the voters have no knowledge of or influence over the acts that are committed by the secret agencies of their governments?

Nuclear weapons were developed in secret. It is doubtful whether the people of the United States would have approved of the development of such anti-human weapons, or their use against an already-defeated Japan, if they had known that these things were going to happen. The true motive for the nuclear bombings was also kept secret. In the words of General Groves, speaking confidentially to colleagues at Los Alamos, the real motive was to control the Soviet Union.

The true circumstances surrounding the start of the Vietnam war would never have been known if Daniel Ellsberg had not leaked the Pentagon Papers. Ellsberg thought that once the American public realized that their countrys entry into the war was based on a lie, the war would end. It did not end immediately, but undoubtedly Ellsbergs action contributed to the end of the war.

In a democracy, the power of judging and controlling governmental policy is supposed to be in the hands of the people. It is completely clear that if the people do not know what their government is doing, then they cannot judge or control governmental policy, and democracy has been abolished. There has always been a glaring contradiction between democracy and secret branches of the government, such as the CIA, which conducts its assassinations and its dirty wars in South America without any public knowledge or control.

## **Julian Assange, a Martyr to the Truth**

Barack Obama decided not to prosecute WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange because the New York Times had also published classified documents, and also because he thought that the Espionage Act was unduly broad and possibly unconstitutional. However, during Donald Trumps extreme right-wing (neofascist) presidency, Trump had no such qualms. In fact, high-level governmental lying became a way of life. According to the Washington Post fact checker, Trump himself told an average of 15 lies per day during his first year in office.

Joe Biden might have reversed Trump's prosecution of Assange but he has not yet done so.

From the rest of the world, outside the United States, very many voices from across the political spectrum have

been raised condemning Americas 11-year-long persecution of Julian Assange; until recently. No one in the U.S. Congress has had the courage to defend Assange. However, in April, 2023, seven members of Congress, led by Rep. Rashida Tlaib, signed a letter to Attorney General Merrick Garland asking him to drop the charges against Assange. Those signing the letter were Reps. Tlaib, Omar, Bowman, Bush, Casar, Ocasio-Cortez, and Pressley. Their letter reads (in part):

“The prosecution of Mr. Assange, if successful, not only sets a legal precedent whereby journalists or publishers can be prosecuted, but a political one as well. In the future the New York Times or Washington Post could be prosecuted when they publish important stories based on classified information. Or, just as dangerous for democracy, they may refrain from publishing such stories for fear of prosecution.”

Politicians in the UK, Australia, Brazil, and Mexico sent similar letters. A letter from the U.K. Reads as follows:

“This [the Assange prosecution] would clearly have a chilling impact on journalism and would set a dangerous precedent for other journalists and media organisations. It would also undermine the US reputation on freedom of expression and the rule of law.”

The New York Times, the Guardian, Le Monde, El Pas, and Der Spiegel released a letter condemning the prosecution of Julian Assange:

“Obtaining and disclosing sensitive information when necessary in the public interest is a core part of the daily work of journalists. If that work is criminalised, our public discourse and our democracies are made significantly weaker.”

Chip Gibbons, Director of the Defending Rights & Dissent Policy organization, made the following comment:

“Defending Rights & Dissent applauds Rep. Rashida



Tlaibs courageous defense of the First Amendment. Defending the Bill Of Rights is the responsibility of every branch of government and we are proud to stand with those members of Congress who are joining with nearly every press freedom group and newspapers such as The New York Times, in calling on the Department of Justice to end its prosecution of Julian Assange. When the Trump Administration brought unprecedented Espionage Act charges against Julian Assange for doing what journalists do everyday, they put the First Amendment in peril. To turn the page, the Biden Administration must heed the call of nearly every major human rights and press freedom group, and halt this press freedom endangering prosecution.”

I wonder whether those who wish to continue the prosecution of Assange realize that they will attract an enormous amount of public attention to the governmental crimes that he is accused of revealing.

## **Leaks from the Pentagon**

In mid-April, 2023, 21-year-old Air National Guardsman Jack Teixeira published a number of leaked secret documents from the Pentagon. The leaks revealed (among other things) that the U.S. government has not been honest with the public about the war in Ukraine. The public has been told that Ukraine is likely to achieve victory soon. If kept supplied with advanced weapons and ammunition by NATO. However, the Pentagon leaks reveal that a stalemate is much more likely, increasing the danger that this proxy war of the U.S. and NATO against Russia will involve nuclear weapons.

The Pentagon leaks also reveal how the Ukraine war now involves the Middle East and the long-term conflict between Israel and Iran.



Figure 4: Wikileaks' Julian Assange removed from the Ecuador embassy.

## Edward Snowdens Revelations

The gross, wholesale electronic spying on citizens revealed by Snowden seems to be specifically aimed at eliminating democracy. It is aimed at instilling universal fear and conformity, fear of blackmail and fear of being out of step, so that the public will not dare to oppose whatever the government does, no matter how criminal or unconstitutional.

## The Deep State

What is the excuse for the massive spying reported by Snowden, spying not only on US citizens but also on the citizens of other countries throughout the world? “We want to protect you from terrorism,” the government answers. But terrorism is not a real threat, it is an invented one. It was invented by the military-industrial complex because, at the end of

the Cold War, this enormous money-making conglomerate lacked enemies.

The revelations of Edward Snowden and others have shown that the number of people involved in secret operations of the United States government is now as large as the entire population of Norway: roughly 5 million. The influence of this dark side of government has become so great that no president is able to resist it.

The people of the United States must make the effort needed to reclaim their democracy.

# Prosecuting Donald Trump

## Donald Trump Is Currently Being Charged with 34 Felonies

11 Apr 2023 - The State of New York, under the leadership of Manhattan District Attorney Alvin L. Bragg Jr., has arrested the former president, finger-printed him, and charged him with 34 counts of falsifying business records in the first degree, in violation of Penal Law Paragraph 175.

## Trump's Major Crimes

The crimes for which he is currently being prosecuted are relatively minor compared with his major crimes. Here is a list of what I consider to be his greatest crimes:

1. He claimed that climate change was a hoax, withdrew the United States from the Paris Agreement, and sabotaged the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to control greenhouse gas emissions.

2. Although he was aware of the serious nature of COVID-19, he claimed that it was no more dangerous than the flu in order for business to continue as usual. In this way he was responsible for hundreds of thousands of excess deaths in the United States.

3. He encouraged his followers to attack the United States Capitol on January 6, 2020, in order to overthrow the results of the presidential election in which he was defeated.

There is so much wrong with Donald Trump that one hardly knows where to start. He is a bully, braggart, narcissist, racist, misogynist, habitual liar, and tax evader, in

addition to being demonstrably ignorant and accused of rape by many women. He has contempt for both domestic and international law, as well as for the US Constitution. In the words of Michael Moore, he is a “part-time clown and full-time sociopath”. However, it is Trumps climate change denial, withdrawal from the Paris agreement, and sponsorship of fossil fuels that pose the greatest threats to the future of human society and the biosphere. The general support of the Republican Party for the fossil fuel industry is the reason why Prof. Noam Chomsky has called the party “the most dangerous organization in history”.

## **Trump’s Climate Change Denial**

In a recent article, climate expert Dr. Andrew Glickson wrote: “The train has left the station and global heating is advancing toward +2 and then toward +4 degrees Celsius, as projected by the IPCC and in the words of Joachim Hans Schellnhuber, Germany’s chief climate scientist, signifies the breakdown of civilization. Largely ignored or watered down by much of the mainstream media , betrayed by most political parties, including those who used to regard climate change as ‘the greatest moral issue of our time’, the population continues to be distracted by bread and circuses. Nowadays even some of the Greens appear to consider plastic bags and the tampon tax as greater vote winners than the demise of the biosphere.”

Why did Professor Noam Chomsky call the US Republican Party “The most dangerous organization in the history of the world”? In the primary that preceded the 2016 presidential election, every single Republican candidate with a chance of being nominated was a climate change denier. All received amazingly generous checks from giant fossil fuel or-

ganizations. When elected, Donald Trump not only pulled the United States out of the Paris Agreement; he also sabotaged the Environmental Protection Agency to such an extent that the carefully collected facts on climate change that the agency had accumulated had to be secretly saved by scientists to prevent their destruction by the Trump administration. Furthermore, Donald Trump not only subsidizes giant coal corporations. He also sabotages renewable energy initiatives in the United States. This is a major crime. It is a crime against humanity and a crime against the biosphere.

## Children in Cages

Here are some excerpts from the written testimony of Clara Long, Deputy Washington Director (Acting) Senior Researcher, US Program Human Rights Watch. The testimony was submitted to the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Reform for a hearing on July 19, 2019:

“Our in-depth interviews with children revealed that the US Border Patrol is holding many children, including some who are much too young to take care of themselves, in jail like border facilities for weeks at a time without contact with family members, or regular access to showers, clean clothes, toothbrushes, or proper beds. Many were sick. Many, including children as young as 2 or 3, were separated from adult caretakers without any provisions for their care besides that provided by unrelated older children also being held in detention...

“A 7-year-old girl I attempted to interview entered the room silently but burst into tears when we asked whom she traveled with to the US. ‘My aunt,’ she said, with a keening cry. She was so upset we decided not to attempt to interview her, a situation that happened several times during our

visit. A bracelet on her wrist had the words US parent and a phone number written in permanent marker. We called the number on the spot and found out that no one had informed her desperate parents where she was being held. Some of the most emotional moments of our visit came witnessing children speak for the first time with their parents on an attorneys phone.”

Trumps treatment of young children is a crime. It is a crime against human rights.

## **Threats of War**

Donald Trump has frequently threatened foreign countries with war, even nuclear war. For example, regarding the conflict with North Korea, Trump said “Rocket man is on a suicide mission for himself and his regime. If [the US] is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea”. Trump has also threatened Iran with war. Such threats are a crime under both the Nuremberg Principles and the United Nations Charter.

## **Fascism, Then and Now**

Worrying comparisons can be made between the raciest and authoritarian governments that we see todays world and the rise of fascism in Europe in the 1930s. More details can be found in my book, “Fascism Then and Now” , which can be freely downloaded and circulated from the following link:

<https://eacpe.org/app/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Fascism-then-and-now-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>



Figure 5: Is this the person to whom we ought to entrust the future of our planet? When elected, Donald Trump not only pulled the United States out of the Paris Agreement; he also sabotaged the Environmental Protection Agency to such an extent that the carefully collected facts on climate change that the agency had accumulated had to be secretly saved by scientists to prevent their destruction by the Trump administration. Furthermore, Donald Trump's administration not only subsidizes giant coal corporations. It also has sabotages renewable energy initiatives in the United States.



# The Great Importance of the ICC

## Establishment of the International Criminal Court

In 1998, in Rome, representatives of 120 countries signed a statute establishing an International Criminal Court (ICC), with jurisdiction over the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression.

Four years were to pass before the necessary ratifications were gathered, but by Thursday, April 11, 2002, 66 nations had ratified the Rome agreement, 6 more than the 60 needed to make the court permanent. It would be impossible to overstate the importance of the ICC. At last, international law acting on individuals has become a reality! The only effective and just way that international laws can act is to make individuals responsible and punishable, since (in the words of Alexander Hamilton) “To coerce states is one of the maddest projects that was ever devised.”

At present, the ICC functions very imperfectly because of the bitter opposition of several powerful countries; notably, the United States. U.S. President George W. Bush signed into law the American Service members Protection Act of 2002, which is intended to intimidate countries that ratify the treaty for the ICC. The new law authorizes the use of military force to liberate any American or citizen of a U.S.-allied country being held by the court, which is located in The Hague. This provision, dubbed the “Hague invasion clause,” has caused a strong reaction from U.S. allies around the world, particularly in the Netherlands.

## **US foreign policy is essentially unchanged**

Joe Biden's appointment of Antony Blinken as Secretary of State signaled that the aggressive foreign policy of the United States would remain unchanged. During the administrations of every US president, violence, war and murder have been exported to the remainder of the world, and the appointment of Blinken, who is known for advocating the invasion of Iraq, signaled that this would not change under Biden. Bombs would be dropped, and people would be murdered by drones or by the dirty tricks department of the CIA.

## **The ICC and UN Charter Reform**

The Second World War was even more disastrous than the First. Estimates of the total number of people who died as a result of the war range between 50 million and 80 million. With the unspeakable suffering caused by the war fresh in their minds, representatives of the victorious allied countries assembled in San Francisco to draft the charter of a global organization which they hoped would end the institution of war once and for all.

The Preamble to the United Nations Charter starts with the words: "We , the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind; and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security; and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest; and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples, have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims."

Article 2 of the UN Charter requires that "All members

shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. This requirement is somewhat qualified by Article 51, which says that Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.”

Thus, in general, war is illegal under the UN Charter. Self-defense against an armed attack is permitted, but only for a limited time, until the Security Council has had time to act. The United Nations Charter does not permit the threat or use of force in preemptive wars, or to produce regime changes, or for so-called “democratization”, or for the domination of regions that are rich in oil.

Clearly, the United Nations Charter aims at abolishing the institution of war once and for all; but the present Charter has proved to be much too weak to accomplish this purpose, since it is a confederation of the member states rather than a federation. This does not mean that our present United Nations is a failure. Far from it! The UN has achieved almost universal membership, which the League of Nations failed to do. The Preamble to the Charter speaks of “the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples”, and UN agencies, such as the World Health Organization, the Food and Agricultural Organization and UNESCO, have worked very effectively to improve the lives of people throughout the world. Furthermore, the UN has served as a meeting place for diplomats from all countries, and many potentially serious conflicts have been resolved by informal conversations behind the scenes at the UN. Finally, although often unenforceable, resolutions of the UN General Assembly and

declarations by the Secretary General have great normative value.

## **A World Federation**

Here is a link to my book advocating strengthening the United Nations by converting it into a World Federation:

<https://eacpe.org/app/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/A-World-Federation-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

At present, the United Nations is too weak to prevent wars because it tries to coerce states by means of sanctions. This is not only ineffective, but also unjust, because the burdens of the sanctions fall on the poor people of a country, rather than on its guilty leaders. By contrast, a federation can make laws that act on individuals.

## **The Illegal and Immoral Invasion of Iraq**

<https://www.transcend.org/tms/2023/03/the-iraq-war-20-years-ago-no-shame-no-lessons-learned-no-arrest-order-on-nato-state-leaders/>

<https://countercurrents.org/2023/03/iraq-invasion-20th-anniversary-5-million-dead-in-iraqi-holocaust/?swcfpc=1>

<https://popularresistance.org/icc-charges-putin-with-war-crimes-us-and-israeli-leaders-enjoy-impunity/>

It has been almost exactly 20 years since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. All over the world, millions of people protested against this brutal act, but to no avail. Today, as a result of the war, Iraq is in ruins, as is the entire Middle East. Nevertheless, the ICC has not indicted Bush and other leaders who started the war. This shows that the International Criminal Court operates very imperfectly today. Nevertheless, the ICC is there, it is established, and we must all work

wholeheartedly for its improvement because of its enormous importance.



**Figure 6: Although the International Criminal Court now operates very imperfectly, it deserves our whole-hearted support.**

# U.S. Wars

## Over 300 Wars!

As documented in the Wikipedia timeline of U.S. wars, and in the Wikipedia list of wars involving the United States, the country has been more or less continuously at war ever since the American Revolutionary War of 1775-1783, which established the US as a nation. Often several wars took place simultaneously. Many of North America's early wars were aimed at eliminating the First People, the native inhabitants of the country, and were thus genocidal in nature.

## Global Hegemony through Military Force

In recent years, the United States has aimed at “full spectrum dominance”, military dominance over all other nations, global hegemony through military force, and the construction of an empire. We should remember that the threat or use of military force violates both the United Nations Charter and the Nuremberg Principles.

## Incredibly Bloated Military Budgets

The United States Military-Industrial Complex seems to have a hold over both Republicans and Democrats. With almost no dissenting voices, both parties recently voted to give roughly a trillion dollars for weapons and other military purposes

## **Militarism Is the US National Religion**

Here are some quotations from an article by William Astore:

“We believe in wars. We may no longer believe in formal declarations of war... but that sure hasn’t stopped us from waging them. From Korea to Vietnam, Afghanistan to Iraq, the Cold War to the War on Terror, and so many military interventions in between, including Grenada, Panama and Somalia, North Americans are always fighting somewhere, as if we saw great utility in thumbing our noses at the Prince of Peace (that’s Jesus Christ, if I remember my Catholic Catechism correctly)

“We believe in weaponry, the more expensive the better. The underperforming F-35 stealth fighter may cost \$1.45 trillion over its lifetime. An updated nuclear triad (land-based missiles, nuclear submarines, and strategic bombers) may cost that already mentioned \$1.7 trillion. New (and malfunctioning) aircraft carriers cost us more than \$10 billion each. And all such weaponry requests get funded, with few questions asked, despite a history of their redundancy, ridiculously high price, regular cost overruns, and mediocre performance. Meanwhile, North Americans squabble bitterly over a few hundred million dollars for the arts and humanities...”

## **The U.S.-led Invasion of Iraq**

March 20, 2023 marked the 20th anniversary of the criminal invasion of Iraq. It was based on a lie, which asserted that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction. When Iraq was invaded, no such nuclear, biological or chemical weapons were ever found. However, the invasion ultimately resulted in more than 5 million Iraqi deaths.



Many of those who died were children, deprived of food and medicines by postwar sanctions.

## **War Has Become Prohibitively Dangerous**

War was always madness, always immoral, always the cause of unspeakable suffering, economic waste and widespread destruction, and always a source of poverty, hate, barbarism and endless cycles of revenge and counter-revenge. It has always been a crime for soldiers to kill people, just as it is a crime for murderers in civil society to kill people. No flag has ever been wide enough to cover up the atrocities of war.

But today, the development of all-destroying thermonuclear weapons has put war completely beyond the bounds of sanity and elementary humanity.

Today, the existing nuclear weapons have half a million times the power of the bombs that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. A thermonuclear war would destroy human civilization, together with most of the plants and animals with which we share the gift of life.

Research has shown that firestorms produced by a nuclear war would send vast quantities of smoke into the atmosphere, blocking sunlight, and blocking the hydrological cycle. The climate would become very cold for a period of about ten years. Human agriculture would fail. Plants and animals would also be killed by the nuclear winter.

Can we not rid ourselves of both nuclear weapons and the institution of war itself?

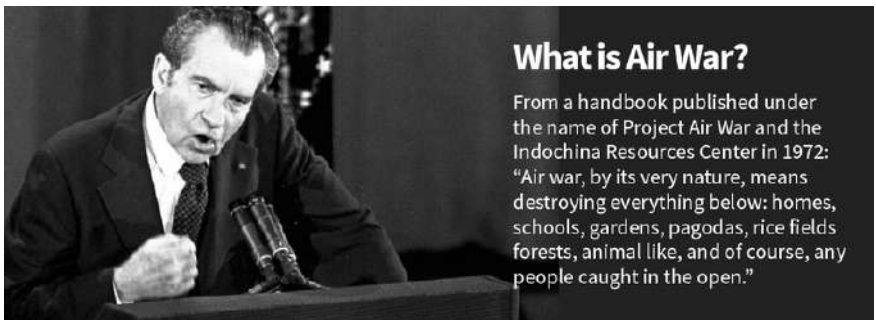
We must act quickly and resolutely before our beautiful world is reduced to radioactive ashes, together with everything that we love.



**Figure 7: Frightened children flee from an air attack in Vietnam.**



President Nixon



## What is Air War?

From a handbook published under the name of Project Air War and the Indochina Resources Center in 1972: "Air war, by its very nature, means destroying everything below: homes, schools, gardens, pagodas, rice fields, forests, animal life, and of course, any people caught in the open."



# Our Global Water Crisis

## A Few Facts

In its home-page on World Water Day, 22 Mar 2021, the United Nations pointed out the following facts:

Today, 1 in 3 people live without safe drinking water.

By 2050, up to 5.7 billion people could be living in areas where water is scarce for at least one month a year.

Climate-resilient water supply and sanitation could save the lives of more than 360,000 infants every year.

If we limit global warming to 1.5 degrees C above pre-industrial levels, we could cut climate-induced water stress by up to 50%.

Extreme weather has caused more than 90% of major disasters over the last decade.

By 2040, global energy demand is projected to increase by over 25% and water demand is expected to increase by more than 50%.

Clearly, water is a crucial resource, and the future well-being of human society depends on how well we manage our global supply of fresh water. This will require a high level of international cooperation and social justice.



Figure 8: Maude Barlow (born 1947). The Wikipedia article on her states that she is a “Canadian author and activist. She is the National Chairperson of the Council of Canadians, a citizens’ advocacy organization with members and chapters across Canada. She is also the co-founder of the Blue Planet Project, which works internationally for the human right to water. Maude chairs the board of Washington-based Food and Water Watch, is a founding member of the San Francisco-based International Forum on Globalization, and a Councillor with the Hamburg-based World Future Council. In 2008/2009, she served as Senior Advisor on Water to the 63rd President of the United Nations General Assembly and was a leader in the campaign to have water recognized as a human

## Maude Barlow: Water as a Human Right

In many countries, large corporations have taken control of water supplies, and are now selling water at prices that poor citizens cannot afford. Maude Barlow, born in 1947 in Canada, is leading the struggle against the commodification of water. As the result of her campaign, the United Nations has declared water to be a human right. This is particularly important at a time when fresh water is becoming increasingly scarce.

Here are a few things that Maud Barlow has said:

“Do not listen to those who say there is nothing you can do to the very real and large social and environmental issues of our time.”

“Everything is now for sale. Even those areas of life that we once considered sacred like health and education, food and water and air and seeds and genes and a heritage. It is all now for sale.”

“There is simply no way to overstate the water crisis of the planet today.”

“We are committed with our lives to building a different model and a different future for humanity, the Earth, and other species. We have envisaged a moral alternative to economic globalization and we will not rest until we see it realized.”

“No piecemeal solution is going to prevent the collapse of whole societies and ecosystems a radical re-thinking of our values, priorities and political systems is urgent.”

## **Falling Water Tables in China May Cause Famine in Africa**

After a lecture at the University of Copenhagen, Lester R. Brown of the Earth Policy Institute was asked which resource would be the first to become critically scarce. Everyone in the audience expected him to say “oil”, but instead he said “fresh water”. He went on to explain that falling water tables in China would soon make China unable to feed its population.

This would not cause famine in China itself because of the strength of the Chinese economy, which would allow the Chinese to purchase grain on the world market. However, shortages of fresh water in China would indeed cause famine, for example in Africa, because Chinese demand for grain would raise prices on the world market beyond the ability of poor countries to pay.

## **The Threat of a Large-Scale Global Famine**

Unless efforts are made to stabilize and ultimately reduce global population, there is a serious threat that climate change, population growth, and the end of the fossil fuel era could combine to produce a large-scale famine by the middle of the 21st century.

As glaciers melt in the Himalayas and the Andes, depriving India, China and South America of summer water supplies; as sea levels rise, drowning fertile rice-growing regions of Southeast Asia; as droughts reduce the food production of North America and Southern Europe; as groundwater levels fall in China, India, the Middle East and the United States; and as high-yield modern agriculture becomes less possible because fossil fuel inputs are lacking, there is a danger that



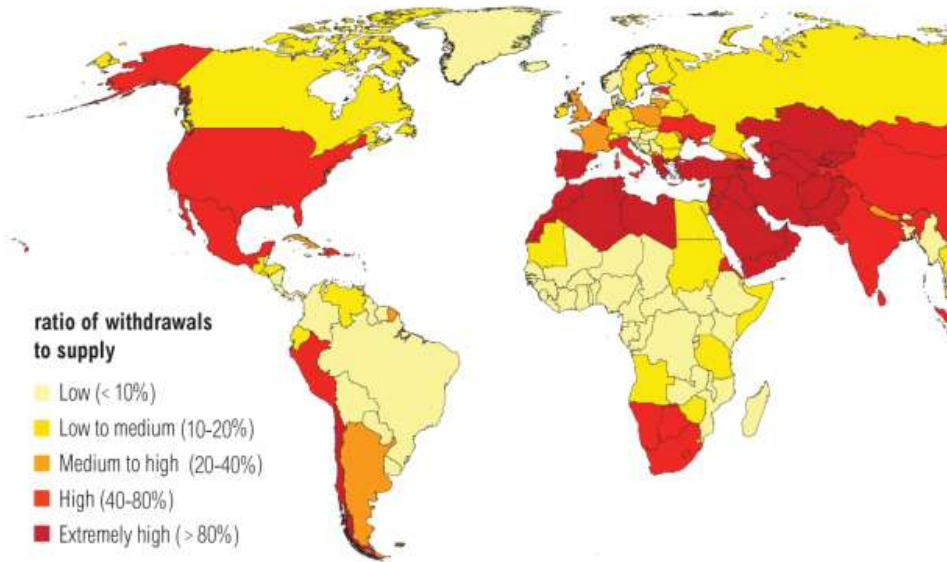
a famine involving billions of people, rather than millions, may occur.

## **My Own Book on Water**

Interested readers may download and circulate my book on water free of charge from the following link:

<http://eacpe.org/app/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Water-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## Water Stress by Country: 2040



**NOTE:** Projections are based on a business-as-usual scenario using SSP2 and RCP8.5.

For more: [ow.ly/RiWop](https://ow.ly/RiWop)

 WORLD RESOU

Figure 9: Because of climate change, many of the world's countries will experience water stress by 2140.

# The U.S. Must Stop Threatening China

## The US Aggressive Military-Industrial Complex

5 Mar 2023 - It appears that the military-industrial complex has complete control of the government of the United States, which recently voted to give the Pentagon roughly a trillion dollars of the taxpayers money. This was done by cutting back on social programs that would have helped poor working families.

Recently Joan Roelofs published a book entitled “The Trillion Dollar Silencer: Why There Is So Little Anti-War Protest in the United States” (Atlanta: Clarity Press, 2022). In this book, she points out that the U.S. military-industrial complex has located military bases in regions where the local economy is entirely dependent on them. The vast river of money flowing into the pockets of the military-industrial complex implies that very many people earn their living, directly, or indirectly, from the manufacture or use of weapons.

Why is there bipartisan support for sending many billions of dollars worth of advanced weaponry to Ukraine, thus gradually escalating the war into an extremely dangerous proxy war between Russia and the United States together with its NATO allies? The great danger is that the escalation of the conflict will result in nuclear war. However, politicians from both U.S. political parties are so blinded by nationalism that they believe the risks to be necessary in order to “weaken Russia”, thus asserting American global hegemony.

## The U.S. Anti-China Campaign

As if the proxy war with Russia were not enough, the U.S. government, driven by the greed of the military-industrial complex, has begun to threaten a war with China. Here are some links that report on the recent Anti-China campaign, and the unprovoked threats to China:

<https://janataweekly.org/u-s-admits-weather-pushed-chinese-balloon-off-course-u-s-shot-down-hobbyists-12-balloon-in-2m-missile-attack/>

<https://countercurrents.org/2023/03/at-the-brink-of-war-in-the-pacific-the-nightmare-of-great-power-rivalry-over-taiwan/?swcfpc=1>

<https://countercurrents.org/2023/03/we-must-stop-the-march-towards-world-war-iii-now/?swcfpc=1>

<https://popularresistance.org/the-context-of-the-new-anti-china-campaign/>

<https://transnational.live/2023/02/26/john-menadue-the-us-sees-china-through-the-dark-mirror-of-its-own-unbridled-aggression/>

<https://janataweekly.org/u-s-admits-weather-pushed-chinese-balloon-off-course-u-s-shot-down-hobbyists-12-balloon-in-2m-missile-attack/>

<https://www.transcend.org/tms/2023/02/what-we-know-about-the-us-air-forces-balloon-party-so-far/>

<https://www.other-news.info/balloons-and-ufos-aside-war-with-china-is-not-inevitable/>

<https://popularresistance.org/why-the-us-seeks-war-with-china-by-2025/>

<https://popularresistance.org/the-us-is-preparing-australia-to-fight-its-war-against-china/>

<https://popularresistance.org/protesters-disrupt-house-china-panels-first-hearing>

## **The Threat of War, and Actual War**

To justify obscenely enormous government spending on weapons, the military-industrial complex does not need actual war only the threat of war. But threats can lead to actual war, even if no one wants it, as we should have learned from the outbreak of World War I.

## **The Threat of Nuclear War**

Reading the discussion in the links given above, one finds no mention of the fact that the United States and China are both nuclear armed nations. A war between the U.S. and China is visualized as a conventional war (which, by the way, the United States certainly could not win). However, a war between two nuclear-armed nations inevitably exposes the world to the danger of a catastrophic nuclear war, in which a large fraction of its humans, animals and plants would perish. We cannot afford to take this risk.



## Cooperation Rather Than Competition

Instead of aiming at global hegemony through military power, and regarding China as a competitor, and hence an enemy, the United States should cooperate with China, arranging exchanges and conferences in science, engineering, economics and climate mitigation.

# NATO's Aggressive Militarism

## The Illegality of NATO: Violation of the UN Charter and the Nuremberg Principles

16 Feb 2023 - In recent years, participation in NATO has made European countries accomplices in US efforts to achieve global hegemony by means of military force, in violation of international law, and especially in violation of the UN Charter, the Nuremberg Principles.

Former UN Assistant Secretary General Hans Christof von Sponeck used the following words to express his opinion that NATO now violates the UN Charter and international law: “In the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty, the Charter of the United Nations was declared to be NATO's legally binding framework. However, the United Nations monopoly of the use of force, especially as specified in Article 51 of the Charter, was no longer accepted according to the 1999 NATO doctrine. NATO's territorial scope, until then limited to the Euro-Atlantic region, was expanded by its members to include the whole world.”

Article 2 of the UN Charter requires that “All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. This requirement is somewhat qualified by Article 51, which says that Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.”



**Figure 10: Former UN Assistant Secretary General Hans Christof von Sponeck believes that NATO now violates the UN Charter and international law.**

Thus, in general, war is illegal under the UN Charter. Self-defense against an armed attack is permitted, but only for a limited time, until the Security Council has had time to act. The United Nations Charter does not permit the threat or use of force in preemptive wars, or to produce regime changes, or for so-called “democratization”, or for the domination of regions that are rich in oil. NATO must not be a party to the threat or use of force for such illegal purposes.

In 1946, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously affirmed the principles of international law recognized by the Charter of the Nuremberg Tribunal and the judgment of the Tribunal. The General Assembly also established an International Law Commission to formalize the Nuremberg Principles. The result was a list that included Principles VI and VII, which are particularly important in the context of the illegality of NATO:

Principle VI: The crimes hereinafter set out are punishable as crimes under international law:

Crimes against peace: (i) Planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression or a war in violation of



international treaties, agreements or assurances; (ii) Participation in a common plan or conspiracy for accomplishment of any of the acts mentioned under (i).

1. War crimes: Violations of the laws and customs of war which include, but are not limited to, murder, ill treatment of prisoners of war or persons on the seas, killing of hostages, plunder of public or private property, wanton destructions of cities, towns or villages, or devastation not justified by military necessity.

2. Crimes against humanity: Atrocities and offenses, including but not limited to murder, extermination, deportation, imprisonment, torture, rape or other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population, or persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds, whether or not in violation of the laws of the country where perpetrated.

Principle VII: Complicity in the commission of a crime against the peace, a war crime or a crime against humanity as set forth in Principle VI as a crime against international law.

Robert H. Jackson, who was the chief United States prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials, said that

“To initiate a war of aggression is therefore not only an international crime, it is the supreme international crime, differing from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole.”

## **Violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)**

At present, NATO's nuclear weapons policies violate both the spirit and the text of the NPT in several respects: Today there are an estimated 200 US nuclear weapons still in Europe. The air forces of the nations in which they are based



**Figure 11: NATO violates the United Nations Charter and international law.**

are regularly trained to deliver the US weapons. This nuclear sharing, as it is called, violates Articles I and II of the NPT, which forbid the transfer of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear-weapon states. It has been argued that the NPT would no longer be in force if a crisis arose, but there is nothing in the NPT saying that the treaty would not hold under all circumstances.

Article VI of the NPT requires states possessing nuclear weapon to get rid of them within a reasonable period of time. This article is violated by fact that NATO policy is guided by a Strategic Concept, which visualizes the continued use of nuclear weapons in the foreseeable future.

The principle of no-first-use of nuclear weapons has been an extremely important safeguard over the years, but it is violated by present NATO policy, which permits the first-use of nuclear weapons in a wide variety of circumstances.

## **The Ukraine War and Nuclear Weapons**

After his illegal and brutal invasion of Ukraine, Vladimir Putin put Russias nuclear forces on high alert, thus threatening the world with an all-destroying nuclear war. The threat brought back memories of the Cuban Missile Crisis, when the world was balanced on the edge of a suicidal and genocidal nuclear war. We are once again reminded of the

urgent need for the world to rid itself of nuclear weapons.

War was always madness, always immoral, always the cause of unspeakable suffering, economic waste and widespread destruction, and always a source of poverty, hate, barbarism and endless cycles of revenge and counter-revenge. It has always been a crime for soldiers to kill people, just as it is a crime for murderers in civil society to kill people. No flag has ever been wide enough to cover up the atrocities of war.

But today, the development of all-destroying thermonuclear weapons has put war completely beyond the bounds of sanity and elementary humanity.

Today, the existing nuclear weapons have half a million times the power of the bombs that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. A thermonuclear war would destroy human civilization, together with most of the plants and animals with which we share the gift of life.

Research has shown that fire-storms produced by a nuclear war would send vast quantities of smoke into the atmosphere, blocking sunlight, and blocking the hydrological cycle. The climate would become very cold for a period of about ten years. Human agriculture would fail. Plants and animals would also be killed by the nuclear winter.

Can we not rid ourselves of both nuclear weapons and the institution of war itself?

We must act quickly and resolutely before our beautiful world is reduced to radioactive ashes, together with everything that we love.

## **The Invasion of Ukraine Cannot Be Called Unprovoked**

To understand how Russians feel about having western weapons and troops poured into a position on their nations borders,

we should imagine how the United States would react if large numbers of Russian weapons and troops were stationed in Mexico or Canada.

In 1991, after the breakup of the Soviet Union, George H.W. Bush and his Secretary of State, James Baker, promised Mikhail Gorbachev that if he agreed to the unification of Germany, NATO would not expand eastward, toward Russia, not one inch. The promise was broken almost immediately by Bill Clinton, who helped to bring the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland into NATO. Russians saw this not only as a betrayal, but also as an act of aggression.

## **The Monroe Doctrine**

There is no document more fundamental to the foreign policy of the United States than the Monroe Doctrine. It states that interference in the Western Hemisphere by European powers would be interpreted as an attack on the United States, and would be opposed by the United States. The Monroe Doctrine has been used to justify U.S. interventions in Central America and in the Caribbean. Understandably, the United States wishes to have its backyard secure. Why should Russia not have the same wish?

## **The U.S. Should Stop Threatening Russia**

Russia's fears are legitimate and based on historical suffering, the U.S. and its allies should stop threatening Russia. Nuclear missiles should be removed from positions near the Russian border, and the eastward expansion of NATO should be halted

## **A Diplomatic Solution to the Conflict Is the Only Way to End It**

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has urged Russia and Ukraine to negotiate an immediate cease-fire and a mutually agreeable settlement to end the conflict. However, this rational solution is opposed by politicians in the United States and elsewhere, who are influenced by money from giant arms corporations. Thus, more and more heavy weapons are sent to Ukraine, pouring oil onto the flames, and enriching the merchants of death. This must stop, and a diplomatic solution must be found under Secretary General Guterres wise leadership.

## **Jens Stoltenberg Urges Production of More and More Munitions**

NATO's Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg recently urged member states to greatly increase their production of modern weapons and munitions, both for their own use, and to increase the armaments sent to Ukraine. Those of us who are on the side of peace are dismayed by this escalation of the conflict. It is the vast profits made by the armaments industry that perpetuate the institution of war.

# Greed is Driving Us Towards Disaster

## Compassion and Greed: Two Sides of Human Nature

Humans are capable of great compassion and unselfishness. Mothers and fathers make many sacrifices for the sake of their families. Kind teachers help us through childhood, and show us the right path. Doctors and nurses devote themselves to the welfare of their patients.

Sadly there is another, side to human nature, a darker side. Human history is stained with the blood of wars and genocides. Today, this dark, aggressive side of human nature threatens to plunge our civilization into an all-destroying thermonuclear war.

Humans often exhibit kindness to those who are closest to themselves, to their families and friends, to their own social group or nation. By contrast, the terrible aggression seen in wars and genocides is directed towards outsiders.

Human nature seems to exhibit what might be called “tribalism”: altruism towards ones own group; aggression towards outsiders. Today this tendency towards tribalism threatens both human civilization and the biosphere.

Greed, in particular the greed of corporations and billionaire oligarchs, is driving human civilization and the biosphere towards disaster.

The greed of giant fossil fuel corporations is driving us towards a tipping point after which human efforts to control climate change will be futile because feedback loops will have taken over. The greed of the military industrial complex is driving us towards a Third World War that might



Figure 12: Greed is driving us towards disaster.



Figure 13: But compassion can save us.

develop into a catastrophic thermonuclear war. The greed of our financial institutions is also driving us towards economic collapse.

Until the start of the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries, human society maintained a more or less sustainable relationship with nature. However, with the beginning of the industrial era, traditional ways of life, containing elements of both social and environmental ethics, were replaced by the money-centered, growth-oriented life of today, from which these vital elements are missing.

According to the followers of Adam Smith (1723-1790), self-interest (even greed) is a sufficient guide to human economic actions. The passage of time has shown that Smith was right in many respects. The free market, which he advocated, has turned out to be the optimum prescription for economic growth. However, history has also shown that there is something horribly wrong or incomplete about the idea that self-interest alone, uninfluenced by ethical and ecological considerations, and totally free from governmental intervention, can be the main motivating force of a happy and just society. There has also proved to be something terribly wrong with the concept of unlimited economic growth.

The Industrial Revolution marked the start of massive human use of fossil fuels. The stored energy from several hundred million years of plant growth began to be used at roughly a million times the rate at which it had been formed. The effect on human society was like that of a narcotic. There was a euphoric (and totally unsustainable) surge of growth of both population and industrial production. Meanwhile, the carbon released into the atmosphere from the burning of fossil fuels began to duplicate the conditions which led to the 5 geologically-observed mass extinctions, during each of which more than half of all living species



disappeared forever.

The greed of giant fossil fuel corporations has recently led them to conduct large-scale advertising campaigns to convince the public that anthropogenic climate change is not real. These corporations own vast oil, coal and gas reserves that must be kept in the ground if we are to avoid catastrophic global warming. It does not seem to bother the fossil fuel giants that if the earth is made uninhabitable, future generations of both humans and animals will perish.

When the United Nations was established in 1945, the purpose of the organization was to abolish the institution of war. This goal was built into many of the articles of the UN Charter. Accordingly, throughout the world, many War Departments were renamed and became Departments of Defense. But the very name is a lie. In an age of nuclear threats and counter-threats, populations are by no means protected. Ordinary citizens are just hostages in a game for power and money. It is all about greed.

Why is war continually threatened? Why is Russia threatened? Why is war with Iran threatened? Why fan the flames of conflict with China? Is it to protect civilians? Absolutely not! In a thermonuclear war, hundreds of millions of civilians would die horribly everywhere in the world, also in neutral countries. What is really being protected are the profits of arms manufacturers. As long as there are tensions; as long as there is a threat of war, military budgets are safe; and the profits of arms makers are safe. The people in several “democracies”, for example the United States, do not rule at the moment. Greed rules.

Greed and lack of ethics are built into the structure of corporations. By law, the Chief Executive Officer of a corporation must be entirely motivated by the collective greed of the stockholders. He must maximize profits. Nothing

must count except the bottom line. If the CEO abandons this single-minded chase after corporate profits for ethical reasons, or for the sake of humanity or the biosphere or the future, he (or she) must, by law, be fired and replaced.

Occasionally, for the sake of their public image, corporations seem to do something for other motives than their own bottom line, but it is usually window dressing. For example, Shell claims to be supporting research on renewable energy. Perhaps there is indeed a small renewable energy laboratory somewhere in that vast corporation; but the real interest of the organization is somewhere else. Shell is sending equipment on a large scale to drill for more and more environment-destroying oil in the Arctic.

In his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, and on his visit to South America, Pope Francis has spoken strongly against economic activity that lacks both social and environmental ethics.

Much depends on whether we are able to break the power that corporations and extremely rich oligarchs now hold over our governments and our mass media. Pope Francis has shown by example what a world leader of courage and honesty can do. Most of us are not in such a position, but each person can do his or her best to restore democracy where it has been lost to corporate money and greed. If the mass media have sold themselves to the highest bidder, we can make our own media. If most politicians are corrupt, we can make our own political movements. As Shelly said, "We are many, they are few".

# Lives in Acting

## A New Freely Downloadable Book

I would like to announce the publication of a new book entitled *Lives in Acting*. The PDF file of the book may be downloaded and circulated free of charge from the following link:

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2023/01/Lives-in-Acting-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

It is part of my series of books on cultural history.

## Human History as Cultural History

We need to reform our teaching of history, so that emphasis will be placed on the gradual growth of human culture and knowledge, a growth to which all nations and ethnic groups have contributed. In fact, the millenia-long accumulation of knowledge and culture is a much more important part of human history than the wars and power struggles of national governments.

“*Lives in Acting*” is part of a series on cultural history. Here is a list of the other books in the series that have, until now, been completed:

### LIVES OF SOME GREAT FILM DIRECTORS

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2022/10/Lives-of-Some-Great-Film-Directors-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## LIVES IN PREHISTORY

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2022/04/Lives-in-Prehistory-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## LIVES IN THE MIDDLE AGES

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2022/03/Lives-in-the-Middle-Ages-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## LIVES IN THE RENAISSANCE

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2022/02/Lives-in-the-Renaissance-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## LIVES IN THE 17TH CENTURY

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2021/12/Lives-in-the-17th-Century-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## LIVES IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2021/11/Lives-in-the-Ancient-World-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## LIVES IN THE 18TH CENTURY

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2021/10/Lives-in-the-18th-Century-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## LIVES IN THE 19TH CENTURY

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2021/09/Lives-in-the-19th-Century-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## LIVES IN THE 20TH CENTURY

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2022/01/Lives-in-the-20th-Century-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## LIVES IN BIOLOGY

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2021/09/Lives-in-Biology-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## LIVES OF SOME GREAT DRAMATISTS

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2022/06/Lives-of-Some-Great-Dramatists-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## LIVES OF SOME GREAT NOVELISTS

<https://eacpe.org/app/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Lives-of-Some-Great-Novelist-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

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Education-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf

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<http://eacpe.org/app/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Lives-in-Engineering-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## LIVES IN ASTRONOMY

<http://eacpe.org/app/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Lives-in-Astronomy-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## LIVES IN CHEMISTRY

<http://eacpe.org/app/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Lives-in-Chemistry-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## LIVES IN MEDICINE

<http://eacpe.org/app/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Lives-in-Medicine-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## LIVES IN ECOLOGY

<http://eacpe.org/app/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Lives-in-Ecology-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## LIVES IN PHYSICS

<http://eacpe.org/app/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Lives-in-Physics-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## LIVES IN ECONOMICS

<http://eacpe.org/app/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Lives-in-economics-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## LIVES IN THE PEACE MOVEMENT

<http://eacpe.org/app/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Lives-in-the-peace-movement-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## LIVES IN MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2022/08/Lives-in-Molecular-Biology-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

<http://eacpe.org/app/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/The-Road-Not-Taken-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

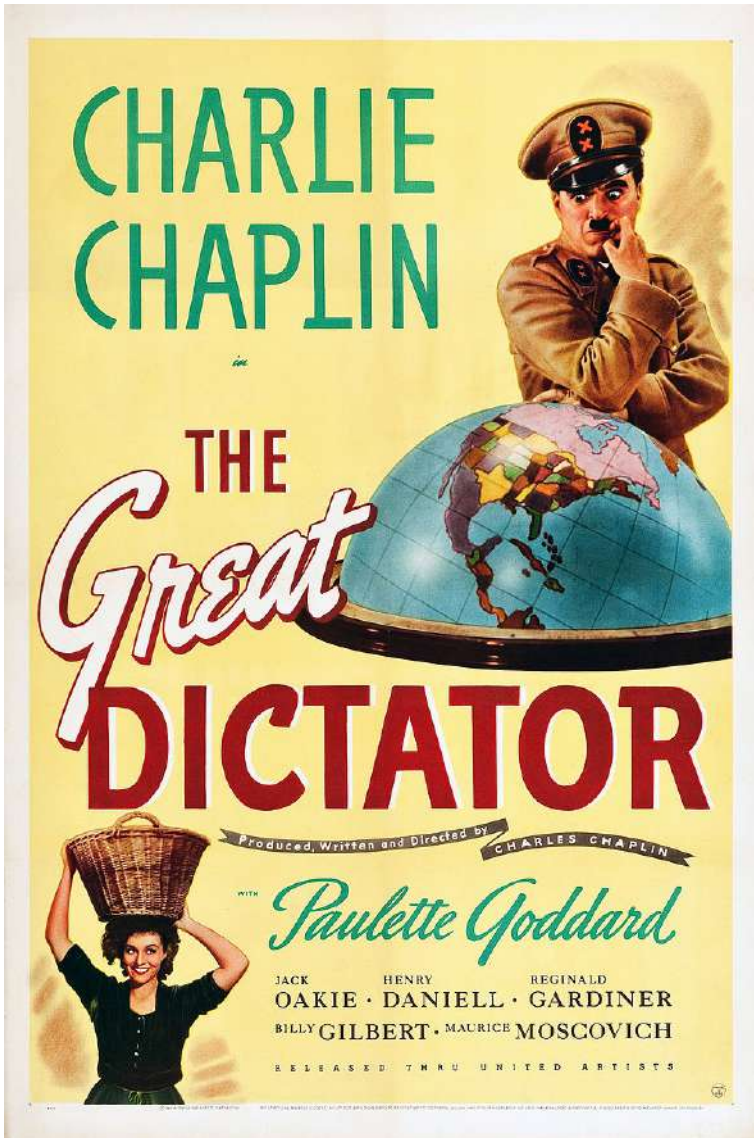


Figure 14: Poster for the American theatrical release of Charlie Chaplin's 1940 film *The Great Dictator*.





**Figure 15: Steinfeld receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom from Barack Obama in 2014.**



Figure 16: With Ingrid Bergman in *Casablanca* (1942).



# Trying to Predict the Future

## **A new freely downloadable book**

I would like to announce the publication of a new eBook entitled “Trying to Predict the Future”. It may be downloaded and circulated, free of charge, from the following link:

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2022/12/Trying-to-Predict-the-Future-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

Below is some discussion of the content of the book:

## **How Can We Try to Predict the Future?**

As the Danish humorist Storm Petersen once said, Its hard to make predictions, especially about the future. How can we try to accomplish this difficult task? I think that the only method open to us is to look at what has happened in the past, to look at trends and changes, and on the basis of this knowledge, attempt to extrapolate these trends into the future. Even so, we may be wrong because of totally unforeseen events or factors. The bulk if this book is devoted to looking at past and present events and trends, in order to have some basis for prediction the future. In the last chapter, I will try to make some predictions.

Today the world is facing serious threats, some of which are listed below.

## **The Climate Emergency**

As United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres recently said, “We are on the road to climate hell, and our foot is on the accelerator”.

Despite promises made at the Glasgow and Cairo climate conferences, greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase. One should be almost grateful for the climate-related disasters that are starting to occur (for example disastrous floods in Pakistan, and widespread deaths of humans and animals from extreme heat) because perhaps they will wake us up so that we will demand that our governments stop sacrificing the future of the Earth for the present economy.

## **Nuclear Insanity**

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has been passed by an overwhelming majority of countries at the United Nations General Assembly, but all of the nuclear armed nations have refused to sign the treaty. In connection with the current war in Ukraine, threats and counter-threats have been made, and the United States has moved nuclear weapons to positions near to Russia.

In the long run, because of the finite yearly danger of nuclear war through accident or miscalculation, and because of radioactive fallout and the nuclear winter effect, it is clear that the survival of human civilization and much of the biosphere can only be assured if nuclear weapons are eliminated.

## **The Population Explosion and Famine**

In 2022, the global population of humans passed eight billion. This huge human population is currently putting increasing stress on the global environment, and we are starting to see

a decline in the global population of animals, insects, birds and fish, as well as the extinction of many species.

Also, as glaciers melt in the Himalayas and Andes, depriving China, India and several South American countries of their summer water supplies; as fertile rice-growing regions of low-lying countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam are drowned by sea level rise; as modern high-yield agriculture becomes increasingly impossible because of the lack of petroleum-based inputs, we can predict that an extremely large-scale famine will occur, involving billions rather than millions of people.

## **What We Can Do to Make a Better Future**

All of the dangers just listed are due to human actions, and therefore, by changing the way we act, we have the power to make a better future. For example, renewables are now cheaper than fossil fuels. By vigorously supporting the Green New Deal, and rapidly putting renewable energy infrastructure in place, we can do much to avoid catastrophic climate change. Regarding the population explosion, and the threat of famine, we can cut military spending and use the money saved to provide primary health care to people throughout the world. Materials and information on contraception should simultaneously be provided. What can we do about nuclear weapons? Surely the nuclear armed nations can see that. In a nuclear war, all nations would suffer equally, including themselves. The people of these nations should put pressure on their governments to abandon their nuclear-armed status.

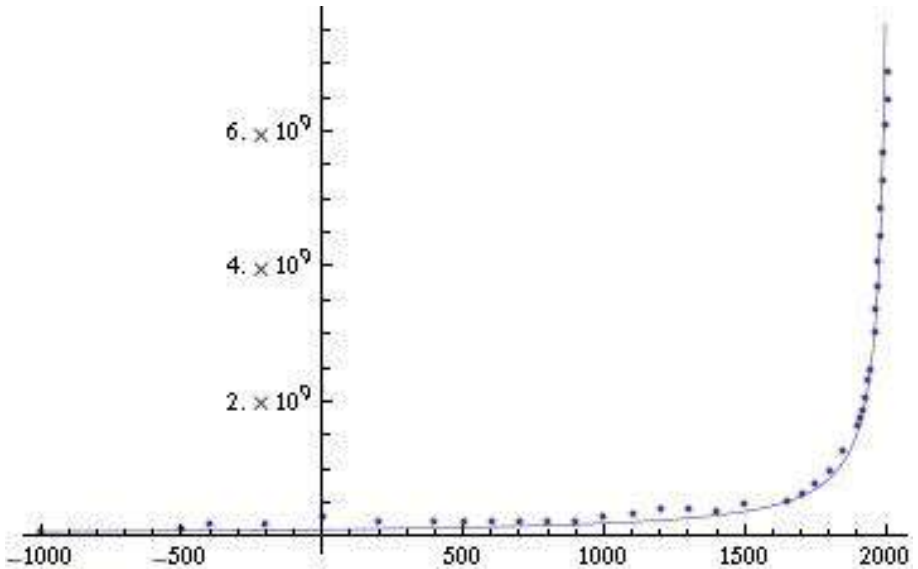


Figure 17: The simple mathematical curve that fits best to human population data over the last 3,000 years is not an exponential increase, but rather a hyperbola of the form  $P=C/(2025-t)$ . Here  $P$  represents population,  $C=190,000,000,000$  and  $t$  is the year. The curve goes to infinity at  $t=2025$  (only a few years away), which is of course impossible. Global population has already started to fall away from the hyperbolic trajectory. Will it level off, or will it crash disastrously? Because of the enormous amount of human suffering that would be involved in a population crash, the question has great importance.





# Militarism of the United States

## **The U.S. Government Aims at Global Hegemony through Military Force**

<https://popularresistance.org/john-pilger-the-us-is-escalating-war-tensions-with-china-in-desperate-bid-to-maintain-global-power/>

<https://www.transcend.org/tms/2022/11/see-867-us-military-bases-on-new-online-tool/>

The military-industrial complex, against which President Dwight D. Eisenhower warned in his famous farewell address, has bipartisan support in the United States Congress and Senate. The amount of money involved is enormous. The world, as a whole, spends roughly two trillion dollars each year on armaments, and a very large share of this, more than 800 billion dollars, is spent by the United States. A vast river of money flows from the huge arms manufacturing corporations into the campaign funds and pockets of politicians, and into the pockets of those who control the mass media. The politicians then vote for obscenely enormous military budgets, to meet various self-created dangers and enemies, and the mass media support the politicians. This circular flow of money has been called “The Devils Dynamo”.

The United States was once an isolationist nation, whose citizens and government wished to keep aloof from the wars and quarrels of Europe. However, at the end of World War II, the large industrial countries of the world, except for the United States, lay in ruins, but industries in the U.S. were



**Figure 18: The yearly Pentagon budget is approaching 1 trillion dollars.**

still intact. Thus the United States was, in spite of itself, thrown onto the world stage.

After the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, hesitancy was replaced by triumphalism, and the “Project for a New American Century”, proclaimed that the United States was the worlds only superpower. The U.S. ruled the world, and could do as it liked.

Paul Wolfowitz, the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, produced his infamous “Wolfowitz Doctrine” paper. Here is a quotation from the first draft of the document:

“Our first objective is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival, either on the territory of the former Soviet Union or elsewhere, which poses a threat on the order of that posed formerly by the Soviet Union. This is a dominant consideration underlying the new regional defense strategy and requires that we endeavor to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power.”

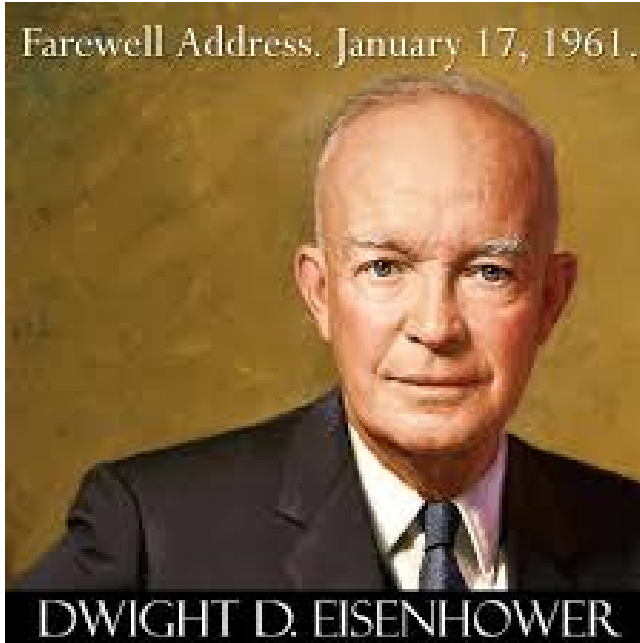


Figure 19: “In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the Military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.”

## **The United States Is the World's Largest Exporter of Armaments**

<https://www.transcend.org/tms/2022/11/corporate-weapons-heaven-is-a-hell-on-earth/>

The arms exported by the United States often go to countries such as Saudi Arabia, where they contribute to the continuation of wars, for example against Yemen, and enormous human suffering. Arms exported by the U.S. find their way to Africa, where they deepen and prolong conflicts.

## **Ukraine: NATO's Proxy War with Russia**

<https://www.transcend.org/tms/2022/11/lets-be-clear-if-ww3-happens-it-will-be-the-result-of-choices-made-by-the-us-empire/>

The current war between Russia and Ukraine is really a proxy war between Russia and the United States. One cannot excuse Putin's criminal invasion of Ukraine. However, it was not unprovoked. Russia fears the eastward expansion of NATO, and was promised that this would never take place, "not one inch", a promise that was almost immediately broken. There are plans to make Ukraine a NATO member, confirming Russia's worst fears. Furthermore, the United States is sending many billions of dollars worth of sophisticated weapons to Ukraine. And finally, attempts to reach a diplomatically negotiated peace settlement have been blocked by the United States, because Washington strategists want to weaken Russia.

## **Secrecy vs. Democracy**

If the people of a country do not know what their government is doing, how can they vote to correct the misconduct of their government? Almost by definition, secrecy and democracy are incompatible. What shall we then think of the efforts of the United States to extradite Julian Assange and prosecute him, when all that he did was to expose secrets through honest journalism? What shall we think of the vast secret surveillance network exposed by Edward Snowden? Most governmental secrets are military secrets.

# Iran: Past and Present

## A new freely downloadable book

I would like to announce the publication of a new eBook entitled Iran, Past and Present. It may be downloaded and circulated, free of charge, from the following link:

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2022/12/Iran-Past-and-Present-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

Below is some discussion of the contents of the book.

## An Ancient Civilization

Iran, or Persia, is one of the most ancient civilizations that we know of. There is evidence that settled communities existed there as early as 7,000 BC. Later, during the Achaemenid period, 559 BC–486 BC, the Persian Empire stretched from India in the east to Turkey and the shores of the Black Sea in the west, also including parts of Egypt and Libya in the south. In the Achaemenid period, the official religion of Iran was Zoroastrianism, one of the most ancient organized religions. Zoroastrian beliefs influenced many other religions, for example, the Jewish religion, Christianity, and Islam.

## Poets of Iran

Iranians love poetry and often know many of the poems by their great poets like Ferdowsi or Hafiz by heart. Often at Iranian parties, someone will recite a verse of one of these poems. It is a challenge to the next person at the table. Can he or she recite the next verse? If so, the challenge passes to

the next person at the table, and so on. A chapter in this book is devoted to Iranian poets.

## **Persian Art and Architecture**

The tradition of Persian miniature painting is ancient, but it also continues today. Western artists such as Matisse have been influenced by the free use of space in Persian miniature painting. Persian architecture is also noteworthy and unique. A chapter in this book is devoted to these two aspects of Iranian culture.

## **Persian Science**

Throughout history, Persian scientists, such as al-Khwarizmi, Omar Khayyam and al-Razi, have made important contributions to mathematics, medicine, chemistry, astronomy and geography. Today Iran is a scientifically advanced modern nation with a rapidly growing output of research papers, and a nuclear reactor program. The reactor has aroused fears the Iran will produce nuclear weapons, although the Iranian government has strenuously denied that it intends to do so,

## **Attacks on Iran**

Modern Iran has never attacked any of its neighbors, but has been attacked numerous times. These attacks include the British-supported revolution that overthrew the Qajar Dynasty and installed Reza Shah, the Allied invasion of Iran during World War II, the CIA and M5 overthrow Mosaddegh in 1951, and the attack on Iran by Saddam Hussein.



Figure 20: *Khusraw discovers Shirin bathing in a pool, 1548.*





Figure 21: **Si-o-se Pol**, one of the bridges of Isfahan.

## **Current Protests in Iran**

A chapter is devoted to the brave protests which have erupted after the murder of Mahsa Amini by the morality police of the tyrannical clerical regime. Hundreds of protesters have been killed and many thousands arrested, potentially facing the death penalty. The outside world extends its support and sympathy to the brave protesters and everyone hopes that the regime will in the end be overthrown. When religion and politics are mixed, the smell is really terrible!

## **Some Personal Memories of Iran**

I hope that readers will forgive me for concluding this book with some personal memories of Iran. In 1943, my father, who was then serving as Dean of Medicine at Boston University, was asked to go to Iran to become the Director General of Public Health for the allied occupation government of the country. After the end of World War II, he remained in Iran until 1950, as advisor to the Iranian Ministry of Health. Programs which my father started ultimately eliminated malaria from country, saving an enormous number of lives.

In 1945, it became possible for my mother, myself and my elder brother Gordon to join my father in Tehran.

We sailed on the Swedish hospital ship Gripsholm, crossed the desert, and joined my father. The final chapter of this book gives you some of my mother's memories of Iran as it was then, as well as some of my own memories.



**Figure 22: Sailing from New York on the Gripsholm in 1945.**



Figure 23: Burning of coal in China has contributed to rapid industrial growth, but besides being a major factor in the threat of catastrophic climate change, it has produced hundreds of thousands of deaths each year through air pollution (an estimated 366,000 in 2013).

# The Climate Emergency

## Two Time Scales

Immediate and drastic action is needed to prevent irreversible climate change. However, the worst effects of climate change lie in the distant future, perhaps as much as a thousand years from today. It is part of our human nature to see what is near to us. We accept the comfort and convenience provided by fossil fuels. It is therefore difficult to mobilize the political will needed for drastic and immediate action.

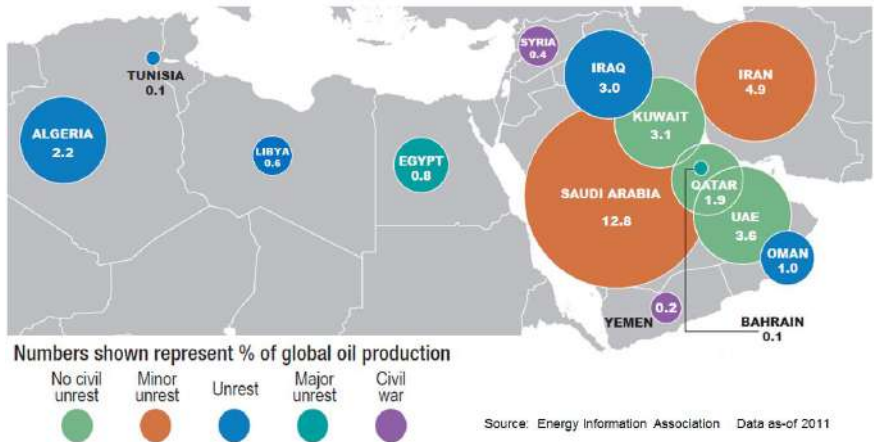


Figure 24: A map showing the major oil-producing countries of the Middle East and North Africa. The percent of global oil production is indicated. Many of the countries shown have some degree of civil unrest or civil war.



Figure 25: Protests against the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines which, if completed, would carry oil from the Canadian oil sands to refineries in Texas.



Figure 26: Protesters at the 2017 G20 meeting in Hamburg Germany.

## Some of Antonio Guterres' Remarks at COP27

Here are a few extracts from the Secretary General's speech:

“Dear friends, in just days, our planet’s population will cross a new threshold. The 8 billionth member of our human family will be born. This milestone puts into perspective what this climate conference is all about. How will we answer when “Baby 8 Billion” is old enough to ask: What did you do for our world and for our planet - when you had the chance?

“Excellencies, This UN Climate Conference is a reminder that the answer is in our hands. And the clock is ticking. We are in the fight of our lives. And we are losing.

“Greenhouse gas emissions keep growing. Global temperatures keep rising. And our planet is fast approaching tipping points that will make climate chaos irreversible. We are on a highway to climate hell with our foot still on the

accelerator.

“The war in Ukraine and other conflicts have caused so much bloodshed and violence and have had dramatic impacts all over the world. But we cannot accept that our attention is not focused on climate change. We must of course work together to support peace efforts and end the tremendous suffering.

“But climate change is on a different timeline, and a different scale. It is the defining issue of our age.”

## Warnings from the Poles

Recently diagonal cracks have been observed in Antarctica’s Thwaites Glacier, and scientists fear that the glacier could shatter into many pieces, like the windscreen of an automobile.

Here are some quotations from a January 1, 2022 article by Ella Gilbert, of the University of Reading:

“The massive Thwaites glacier in West Antarctica contains enough ice to raise global sea levels by 65cm if it were to completely collapse. And, worryingly, recent research suggests that its long-term stability is doubtful as the glacier hemorrhages more and more ice.

“Adding 65cm to global sea levels would be coastline-changing amounts. For context, there’s been around 20cm of sea-level rise since 1900, an amount that is already forcing coastal communities out of their homes and exacerbating environmental problems such as flooding, saltwater contamination and habitat loss.

“But the worry is that Thwaites, sometimes called the doomsday glacier because of its keystone role in the region, might not be the only glacier to go. Were it to empty into the ocean, it could trigger a regional chain reaction and drag



other nearby glaciers in with it, which would mean several meters of sea-level rise. That's because the glaciers in West Antarctica are thought to be vulnerable to a mechanism called Marine Ice Cliff Instability or MICI, where retreating ice exposes increasingly tall, unstable ice cliffs that collapse into the ocean.

“A sea level rise of several meters would inundate many of the world's major cities including Shanghai, New York, Miami, Tokyo, and Mumbai. It would also cover huge swathes of land in coastal regions and largely swallow up low-lying island nations like Kiribati, Tuvalu, and the Maldives.”

The Arctic is heating more than twice as fast as the remainder of the world. The World Meteorological Organization has confirmed a new high temperature Arctic record: 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit [38 degrees Celsius], recorded in the Siberian town of Verkhoyansk, 70 kilometers north of the Arctic Circle. The reading, taken on June 20, 2020, has now been officially confirmed by the WMO. A spokesman commented that “the temperature is more befitting for the Mediterranean than the Arctic”.

## **Recent Climate-Related Disasters**

One must almost be grateful for recent climate-related disasters. Perhaps they will wake us up and make us act with the force needed to match our climate emergency.

Pakistan, the world's fifth most populous country, was already suffering from IMF-imposed austerity rules when it was hit by climate-related floods, which peaked between June and August, 2022. Water from melting glaciers in the Himalayas combined with unusually heavy rains to flood large portions of the country, destroying crops, contaminating water sources, destroying homes, displacing many mil-

lions, and raising the danger of disease and starvation for tens of millions of people. The response of the international community has been wholly inadequate to deal with Pakistans urgent humanitarian crisis.

Rising sea levels and floods in Bangladesh are affecting millions of people in low-lying regions of the country, destroying homes, displacing people, and reducing food production. According to the International Federation of the Red Cross, as many as 7.2 million people have been affected by the floods. Concern is mounting over the much worse floods that the future may bring.

The British Red Cross has stated very recently that nearly 146 million are affected by serious hunger in Africa alone. The agency added that hunger is responsible for 45% of child deaths in Africa.

Outside of Africa, this report mentions three countries of South Asia (Afghanistan, parts of Pakistan and Sri Lanka) as well as two countries of West Asia (Syria and Yemen). In addition this report lists some countries of South and Central America including Haiti, Honduras and Guatemala.

According to a study, the number of poor people living in extreme heat conditions in urban areas will jump by 700 percent by 2050, particularly in West Africa and Southeast Asia.

“Projected future death rates from extreme heat are staggeringly high comparable in magnitude by the end of the century to all cancers or all infectious diseases - and staggeringly unequal,” the report said.

A new study by World Weather Attribution found that the summer droughts of 2022, which affected parts of the U.S., Europe, and China, were made 20 times more likely by climate change.

Across the Northern Hemisphere, extreme heat and low

rainfall led to several unprecedented events: China issued its first-ever a national drought alert; the United Kingdom recorded its highest-ever temperature; Europe experienced its hottest summer; and the water crisis in the US West intensified, prompting new water usage cuts.

## **What Will Happen if We Fail?**

Let me give you my own opinions on this question. I think that, if catastrophic climate change is not avoided, very many species of plants and animals will become extinct. In fact, this mass extinction has already started. We are already losing species at roughly 1,000 times the natural background rate.

Will humans become extinct? Of course, we know from the geological record that every species eventually becomes extinct, but if we look only a few thousand years into the future, I do not think that humans face extinction.

What I believe will happen (if catastrophic climate change is not avoided) is the following:

Most of the earth's surface will become uninhabitable, starting with tropical regions and regions that are destined to be underwater due to sea-level rise. This will lead to a massive refugee crisis, which, like the extinction of animals and plants, has already started.

Although most of the earth's surface will be uninhabitable, there will still be a few regions where human life is possible, for example, the Arctic and Antarctic regions, and high mountain ranges. However, these regions will be small in comparison to our present habitable world, and the global population of humans will be correspondingly reduced. I think that this process will be accompanied by much conflict.

Perhaps this worst-case scenario can motivate us to act with far-sighted vision and resolution, while there is still a small window of opportunity.

# We Are Demanding Too Much

## **A book announcement**

I would like to announce the publication of a new book, which may be downloaded and circulated free of charge from the following link:

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2022/11/We-are-Demanding-Too-Much-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## **The Explosive Rise of Human Population**

When the global population of humans is plotted as a function of time over a period of twelve thousand years, and the uses of fossil fuels is plotted on the same graph, the two curves are seen to rise abruptly and simultaneously during the last two or three centuries. The use of fossil fuels will stop in a few centuries because of depleted resources, but it must stop much more abruptly if catastrophic climate change is to be avoided. This raises the question of whether human population is headed for a crash in the post-fossil-fuel era.

## **We Are Demanding More from Nature Than Nature Can Restore**

Until the agricultural revolution, and later the industrial revolution, humans were few in number, and lived in balance with nature. However, in recent centuries humans have exploded in numbers. The global population will reach 8 billion

in 2022. In order to feed such an enormous population, vast areas of forests have been cut down and converted into farmland. Nevertheless, food prices are starting to rise rapidly, and many parts of the world are threatened with famine.

As glaciers melt in the Himalayas, depriving India and China of summer water supplies; as sea levels rise, drowning the fertile rice fields of Viet Nam and Bangladesh; as drought threatens the productivity of grain-producing regions of North America; and as the end of the fossil fuel era impacts modern high-yield agriculture, there is a threat of wide-spread famine, involving not millions of people, but billions.

## **Reducing Our Demands**

In order to achieve a sustainable society, and to avoid a catastrophic population crash, we must strive to stabilize and later reduce human numbers. We must also strive to live more modestly, and to reduce our demands.

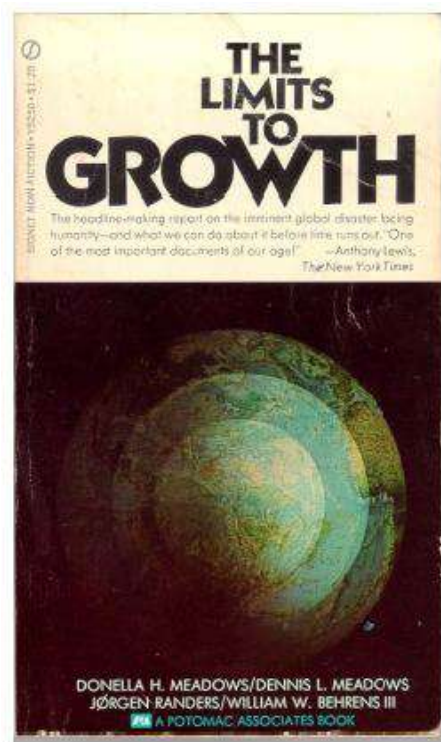


Figure 27: In 1968 Aurelio Peccei, Thorkil Kristensen and others founded the Club of Rome, an organization of economists and scientists devoted to studying the predicament of human society. One of the first acts of the organization was to commission an MIT study of future trends using computer models. The result was a book entitled “Limits to Growth”, published in 1972. From the outset the book was controversial, but it became a best-seller.

# Against Nationalism

## A book announcement

I would like to announce the publication of a new book, which may be downloaded and circulated free of charge from the following link:

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2022/10/Against-Nationalism-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## A Dangerous Anachronism

Today, in an era of all-destroying nuclear weapons, instantaneous global communication and worldwide economic interdependence, nationalism has become a dangerous anachronism. History, as it is taught today, is centered on the country where it is being taught. Our own country is the most important. Our own country is always in the right, according to nationalist historians. Patriotic soldiers and generals are exalted. It is sweet and noble to die for ones country.

But today, war has become prohibitively dangerous. Unless we rid the world of nuclear weapons, the end of human civilization and much of the biosphere is just around the corner. Nationalism has become a dangerous anachronism. It must be replaced by a wider view of the world where cooperation is seen to be more important than competition, and where all nations are valued equally for their contributions to our mutual civilization.



## **Tribalism and Nationalism**

Human nature seems to have a fault, which might be called Tribalism. When our ancestors lived in small tribes of genetically homogeneous hunter-gatherers, competing for territory with other tribes on the grasslands of Africa, the tribe as a whole either survived or perished. Thus the group was the unit on which Darwinian forces of natural selection acted. For this reason, fierce loyalty to ones own tribe and equally fierce aggression towards competing groups seems to be built into our inherited emotional nature. In the modern world, this genetically programmed tendency supports nationalism. Fortunately, education can overwrite inherited tendencies. Today education supports nationalism, but hopefully, in the future, reformed education will support internationalism and cooperation.

## **Reducing Our Demands**

In order to achieve a sustainable society, and to avoid a catastrophic population crash, we must strive to stabilize and later reduce human numbers. We must also strive to live more modestly, and to reduce our demands.

## **Against the Institution of War**

Because the world today spends roughly 2 trillion U.S. dollars on armaments every year, it follows that very many people are making their living from war. This is the reason why it is correct to call war a social and economic institution. However, in an era of all-destroying thermonuclear weapons, war has become prohibitively dangerous, and we must somehow find a way to abolish it as an institution.



Figure 28: Today, the existence of all-destroying modern weapons makes war prohibitively dangerous. If human civilization is to survive, the institution of war must be abolished. This will require effective governance at the global level. The United Nations must be strengthened and given many times the amount of money that it presently has. The UN must also be given the power to make laws that are binding on individuals. .

## Wars of the United States

At the end of World War II, Europe, Russia, China and Japan were all in ruins. The United States was the only major industrialized power to survive the war relatively unscathed. The United States, formerly an isolationist country, stepped hesitantly onto the global stage. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, hesitancy was replaced by the triumphalism and aggression of the Project For a New American Century, whose open aim was world domination through military force. Wars were explained to the American people as being necessary because of the threat of Communism, and later Terrorism.

## **Human History as Cultural History**

Cultural history can be seen as an antidote for nationalism. It allows us to take a wider view of the world, where co-operation is more important than conflict, and where the contributions of all nations, cultures and ethnic groups are recognized.

We need to reform our teaching of history so that the emphasis will be placed on the gradual growth of human culture and knowledge, a growth to which all nations and ethnic groups have contributed. In fact, the millennia-long accumulation of knowledge and culture is a much more important part of human history than the wars and power struggles of rulers and national governments.

# Reforming the United Nations

## Strengthening the UN

It is becoming increasingly clear that the concept of the absolutely sovereign nation-state is a dangerous anachronism in a world of thermonuclear weapons, instantaneous communication, and economic interdependence. Probably our best hope for the future lies in developing the United Nations into a World Federation. The strengthened United Nations should have a legislature with the power to make laws that are binding on individuals, and the ability to arrest and try individual political leaders for violations of these laws. The world federation should also have the power of taxation, and the military and legal powers necessary to guarantee the human rights of ethnic minorities within nations.

In 1945, the victors of World War II gathered in San Francisco to draft the United Nations Charter. The tragic experiences of two world wars, during which the lives of 26 million soldiers and 64 million civilians were lost, had convinced them that security based on national military forces must be replaced by a system of collective security. The first paragraph of the Charter states that the primary purpose of the organization is “to maintain international peace and security, and to that end to take effective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression and other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace.”

In practice, the United Nations has developed several effective modes of action—peacekeeping, peacemaking, peacebuilding, preventive diplomacy and peace enforcement. Even though the organization has been hampered by Cold War tensions and frequently paralyzed by vetoes in the Security Council, it nevertheless has made substantial contributions to global peace by resolving small-scale conflicts and by preventing large-scale ones.

The term peacekeeping, in its narrow sense, is applied to operations where U.N. Military personnel, often unarmed or only lightly armed, form a buffer between hostile forces in order to maintain a cease-fire. Peacemaking refers to U.N. assistance in the settlement of disputes or the resolution of conflicts.

## **International Law**

We can clearly see that in the long run, security can only be achieved by an effective system of international law. The United Nations is the only institution whose authority and structure are suited to constructing and enforcing such a system of law at the global level. U.N. membership includes all nations; and the U.N. has had half a century of experience in addressing global problems.

The impartiality and neutrality of the Secretary-General are accepted and recognized, whereas regional organizations such as NATO cannot claim the same degree of impartiality. Thus it is urgent that the present U.N. Charter be made to function more justly and more effectively; and in the long run, the weaknesses of the present U.N. Charter must be corrected.

The need for international law must be balanced against the desirability of local self-government. Like biological di-

iversity, the cultural diversity of humankind is a treasure to be carefully guarded. A balance or compromise between these two desirable goals could be achieved by granting only a few carefully chosen powers to a strengthened United Nations with sovereignty over all other issues retained by the member states.

## **The Social and Economic Institution of War Must Be Abolished**

There are numerous reasons why war must be abolished as a social institution; and a few of these reasons are as follows: It is extremely important that research funds be used to develop renewable energy sources and to solve other urgent problems now facing humankind, rather than for developing new and more dangerous weapons systems. In spite of the end of the Cold War, the world still spends roughly 2 trillion U.S. dollars per year on armaments, and the total amount spent on war is even greater. Thus, very many people make their living from war, and this is the reason why it is correct to call war a social and economic institution.

The indirect effects of war and the threat of war are also enormous. For example, the World Health Organization lacks funds to carry through an antimalarial programme on as large a scale as would be desirable; but the entire programme could be financed for less than the world spends on armaments in a single day. Five hours of world arms spending is equivalent to the total cost of the 20-year WHO programme which resulted, in 1979, in the eradication of smallpox. With a diversion of funds consumed by three weeks of the military expenditures, the world could create a sanitary water supply for all peoples, thus eliminating the cause of more than half of all human illness.

As bad as conventional arms and conventional weapons may be, it is the possibility of a nuclear war that still poses the greatest threat to humanity. One argument that has been used in favor of nuclear weapons is that no sane political leader would employ them. However, the concept of deterrence ignores the possibility of war by accident or miscalculation, a danger that has been increased by nuclear proliferation

## **The UN Needs the Power to Make Laws That Are Binding on Individuals**

Because of the terrible weapons which have been produced through the misuse of science, and because of the even more destructive weapons which are likely to be devised in the future, the only way that we can insure the survival of civilization is to abolish war as an institution. It seems likely that achievement of this goal will require revision and strengthening of the United Nations Charter. The Charter should not be thought of as cast in concrete for all time. It needs instead to grow with the requirements of our increasingly interdependent global society. We should remember that the Charter was drafted and signed before the first nuclear bomb was dropped on Hiroshima; and it also could not anticipate the extraordinary development of international trade and communication which characterizes the world today.

Among the weaknesses of the present U.N. Charter is the fact that it does not give the United Nations the power to make laws which are binding on individuals. At present, in international law, we treat nations as though they were persons: We punish entire nations by sanctions when the law is broken, even when only the leaders are guilty, even though the burdens of the sanctions fall most heavily on the poorest

and least guilty of the citizens, and even though sanctions often have the effect of uniting the citizens of a country behind the guilty leaders. To be effective, the United Nations needs a legislature with the power to make laws which are binding on individuals, and the power to arrest individual political leaders for flagrant violations of international law. The International Criminal Court is an important step in the right direction, and it deserves our wholehearted support; but today the ICC operates very imperfectly because of vehement opposition from powerful nations, such as the United States.

## **The UN Needs a Reliable and Greatly Enlarged Source of Income**

The United Nations has a number of agencies, such as the World Health Organization, the Food and Agricultural Organization, and UNESCO, whose global services give the UN considerable prestige and de facto power. The effectiveness of the UN as a global authority could be further increased by giving these agencies much larger budgets. In order to do this, and at the same time to promote the shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources, it has been proposed that the U.N. be given the power to tax CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The amount of money which could thus be made available for constructive purposes is very large; and a slight increase in the prices of fossil fuels could make a number of renewable energy technologies economically competitive.

It has also been proposed that the United Nations should be given the power to impose a small tax on international currency transactions (the "Tobin Tax"). The amount of money involved in these transactions is so large that even a few hundredths of a percent in tax on each transaction would be sufficient to solve the financial problems of the United



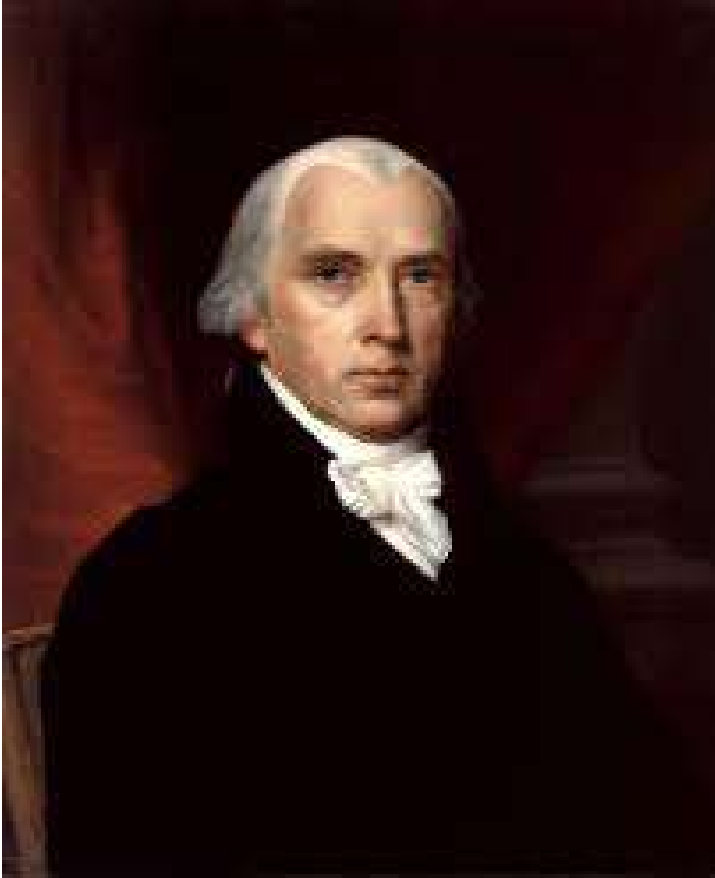


Figure 29: James Madison, wrote that the more he reflected on the use of force, the more he doubted “the practicality, the justice and the efficacy of it when applied to people collectively, and not individually.” He later introduced the Constitutional amendments that became the U.S. Bill of Rights.



Figure 30: Clearly, the United Nations Charter aims at abolishing the institution of war once and for all.

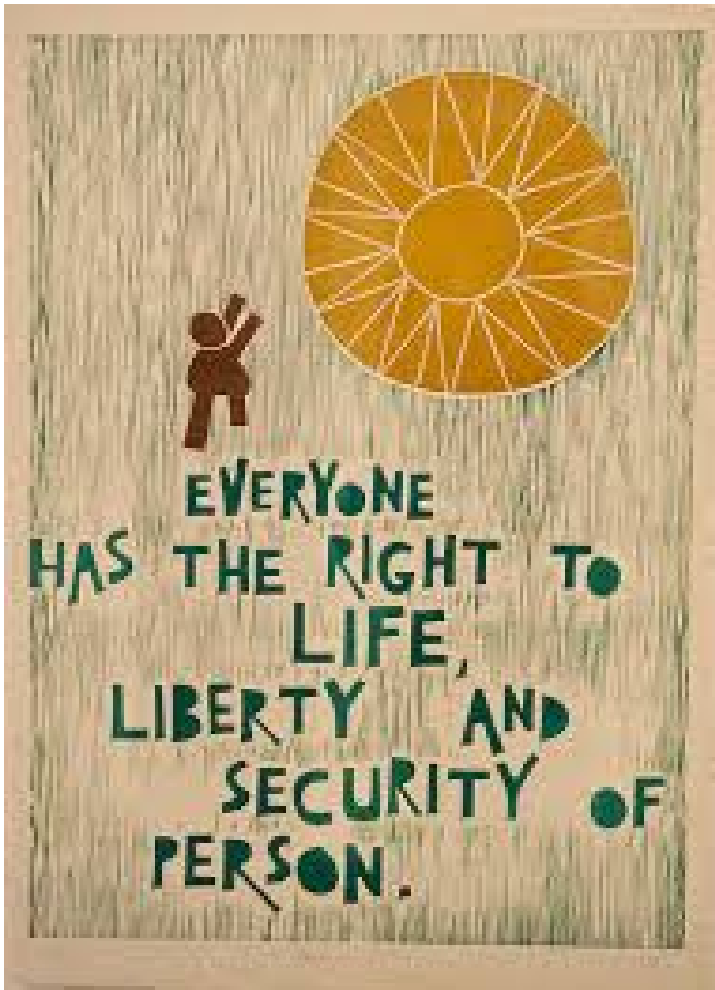


Figure 31: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has great value in defining the norms towards which the world ought to be striving.

Nations. A United Nations tax on air travel has also been proposed.

The provision of a reliable income for the United Nations would have the effect of freeing it from undue influence by any nation, making it more impartial. Impartiality may prove to be the key factor required to give the U.N. the moral authority needed to settle disputes and to maintain peace with a minimum use of force.

## **The Security Council Must Be Abolished**

At the end of World War II, when the present UN Charter was drafted, the victorious nations visualized a world in which the most important of the victors would cooperate to maintain peace. The Security Council, with its veto power for individual members, then seemed like a good idea. However, World War II was followed immediately by the Cold War, and the Security Council became a hindrance to effective UN action. In a reformed United Nations, strengthened and given the powers of a federation, the Security Council should be abolished.

## **The Success of Federations**

Historically, the federal form of government has proved to be extremely robust and successful. Many of today's nations are federations of smaller, partially autonomous, member states. Among these nations are Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Germany, India, Mexico, Russia, Spain, South Africa and the United States.

## **Lessons from the European Union**

The successes and problems of the European Union provide invaluable experience as we consider the measures that will be needed to make the United Nations into a federation. On the whole, the EU has been an enormous success, demonstrating beyond question that it is possible to begin with a very limited special-purpose federation and to gradually expand it, judging at each stage whether the cautiously taken steps have been successful.

The European Union has today made war between its member states virtually impossible. This goal, now achieved, was in fact the vision that inspired the leaders who initiated the European Coal and Steel Community in 1950.

The European Union is by no means without its critics or without problems, but, as we try to think of what is needed for United Nations reform, these criticisms and problems are just as valuable to us as are the successes of the EU.

## **Governments of Large Nations Achieve Internal Peace**

The problem of achieving internal peace over a large geographical area is not insoluble. It has already been solved. There exist today many countries or regions within each of which there is internal peace. Some of these are so large that they are almost worlds in themselves. One thinks of China, India, Brazil, Australia, the Russian Federation, the United States, and the European Union. Many of these enormous societies contain a variety of ethnic groups, a variety of religions and a variety of languages, as well as striking contrasts between wealth and poverty. If these great land areas have been forged into peaceful and cooperative societies, cannot

the same methods of government be applied globally?

# Who Sabotaged Nordstream 2?

## I Agree with Jan Oberg

30 Sep 2022 Dr. Jan Oberg, co-founder and leader of the Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research, wrote a really excellent article on the question of who sabotaged Nordstream 2. In it, he points out that Russia had no motive for sabotaging Nordstream 2. If the Russians had wanted to stop the flow of natural gas through the pipeline, they could have simply turned it off at the Russian end. Here is the link to Dr. Oberg's fine article:

<https://www.transcend.org/tms/2022/10/biden-and-nuland-promised-to-destroy-nordstream-before-the-russian-invasion/>

## Both Joe Biden and Victoria Nuland Said the US Was Going to Do It

In February, 2022, both Joe Biden and his Under-Secretary of State, Victoria Nuland, said that if Russia should invade Ukraine, there would be no Nordstream.

## The United States Had a Motive

The United States had a motive for sabotaging Nordstream 2, namely to weaken Russia by reducing its income from the sale of natural gas. Washington's aim throughout the Ukraine war has been to weaken Russia.



Figure 32: Pulitzer-prize winning investigative journalist Seymour Hersh made waves again Tuesday night as he excoriated the Biden administration and lambasted mainstream media coverage of the Nord Stream bombing at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.



## **US Interference with Other Countries**

If the US is guilty of sabotaging Nordstream 2, it is one more example of US interference in the affairs of other countries. Other examples are too numerous to list. The methods used include regime change, assassinations of politicians, unilateral sanctions, arms transfers, war, and so on.

## **A Crime against the Environment**

The methane bubbling up to the surface from the sabotaged pipeline is entering our earth's atmosphere. Methane is a very powerful greenhouse gas. Although it has a shorter lifetime in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide, while it remains there, methane is twenty times as powerful.

## **We Must Rapidly End Our Dependence on Fossil Fuels**

A point that no one seems to mention in connection with the sabotaging of Nordstream 2, is that we must rapidly end our dependence on all fossil fuels, if we are to have a chance of avoiding catastrophic climate change.



# Steps towards Avoiding a Climate Catastrophe

## Threats Are Becoming More Severe

There is clear evidence that climate-related threats are becoming more severe. One can think of the record-breaking heat waves in Europe and the Americas as well as in China. One can think of drought and falling water tables, which are threatening agriculture in very many countries. And one can also think of the poles, which are warming four times faster than the remainder of the world. There is a danger that coastal cities everywhere will soon be flooded because of rapidly melting polar ice, as is discussed in my book, “Warnings from the Poles.”

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2022/01/Warnings-from-the-Poles.pdf>

What are we to do? What actions can we take to avoid a climate catastrophe? Below is a list of helpful actions that can and should be taken. Many of those listed here have long been advocated by George Monbiot, who writes a weekly environmental column for The Guardian.

## Greatly Reduce Animal Husbandry

Raising animals for food has a number of very harmful impacts on the environment. For example, large areas of rainforests in the Amazon region and elsewhere have been cut down, often illegally, to make place for cattle ranching. In addition to the ecological damage produced by forest loss,



Figure 33: **Smoke destroys human health, regardless of whether it is from cigarettes or coal-fired power plants. Fossil fuel corporations and tobacco companies have exhibited an astonishing degree of cynicism and lack of social responsibility.**



Figure 34: Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg speaks with other child petitioners from 12 countries who presented a landmark complaint to protest the lack of government action on the climate crisis during a press conference in New York, Sept. 23, 2019.



Figure 35: An Arctic wildfire. Layers of peat are burning, and the carbon stored in the peat is being released into the atmosphere.

cattle also produce large amounts of methane, an extremely dangerous greenhouse gas.

Feeding agricultural produce to animals and then eating the animals is an extremely inefficient way of obtaining food for humans. With global population rapidly rising, and with the available agricultural land stationary or falling, it will be necessary to shorten the food chain by eliminating the consumption of meat. Many very satisfactory meat substitutes are currently available, as is shown in the Wikipedia article on meat substitutes.

## **Reform Agricultural Methods**

A very serious problem with Green Revolution plant varieties is that they require heavy inputs of pesticides, fertilizers and irrigation. Because of this, the use of high-yield varieties contributes to social inequality, since only rich farmers can afford the necessary inputs. Monocultures, such as the Green Revolution varieties may also prove to be vulnerable to future epidemics of plant diseases, such as the epidemic that caused the Irish Potato Famine in 1845. Even more importantly, pesticides, fertilizers and irrigation all depend on the use of fossil fuels. One must therefore ask whether high agricultural yields can be maintained in the future, when fossil fuels are expected to become prohibitively scarce and expensive, and when their use ought to be banned to avoid catastrophic climate change.

Natural topsoil is rich in organic material, which contains sequestered carbon that would otherwise be present in our atmosphere in the form of greenhouse gases. In addition, natural topsoil contains an extraordinarily rich diversity of bacteria and worms that act to convert agricultural wastes from one years harvest into nutrients for the growth of next

years crop. Pesticides kill these vital organisms, and make the use of artificial fertilizers necessary. Artificial chemically derived fertilizers also kill the vital topsoil organisms, and thus, paradoxically, make the soil less fertile.

Reformed agricultural methods, such as “no-till farming” can help the soil to retain its high carbon content and the community of organisms on which its fertility depends.

## **Get Money out of Politics**

Citizens everywhere are concerned about the increasing dangers of climate change, and yet governments fail to take any effective climate action. The Keeling curve, which measures the concentration of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere, continues its steady upward trend. In the face of an obvious emergency, why do governments not act? The answer is that the votes of politicians can be bought. The fossil fuel industry is immensely rich, and therefore able to buy politicians. To achieve vitally important governmental action, we must strive to get money out of politics.

## **Raise Popular Awareness of the Climate Emergency**

Everything possible must be done to raise popular awareness of the climate emergency. There is, of course, a danger that some people will react to alarming news by shutting the whole issue out of their heads. But we must be honest. We must tell the truth.



## The Role of the Alternative Media

In general, the mass media behave as though their role is to prevent the peoples of the world from joining hands and working to save the world from thermonuclear and environmental catastrophes. The television viewer sits slumped in a chair, passive, isolated, dis-empowered and stupefied. The future of the world hangs in the balance, the fate of children and grandchildren hang in the balance, but the television viewer feels no impulse to work actively to change the world or to save it. The Roman emperors gave their people bread and circuses to numb them into political inactivity. The modern mass media seem to be playing a similar role.

Because the mass media have failed us completely, the work of alternative media like TMS Weekly Digest has become enormously important for the future of humanity and the biosphere.



# Making Money From War

## A Vast River of Money

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the world spent 2.113 trillion US dollars on armaments in 2021. Of this almost incomprehensible amount of money, the United States spent almost half the total , \$801 billion.

Perhaps one reason for the disproportionately large US arms spending is that in the United States, the arms industry has been privatized, which is not the case in China or Russia. In the US, selling weapons and death is a business. It is a business, on which capitalist investors can make enormous profits, selling weapons and selling war.

## Selling Weapons and War Abroad

The United States is by far the largest exporter of weapons in the world. The US sells weapons through NATO. It also sells weapons to dictatorships like Saudi Arabia, and these same weapons have produced a humanitarian catastrophes such as starvation in Yemen. Small arms exported to Africa deepen and prolong local conflicts.

The aggressive foreign policy of the United States is closely related to the profits made by arms manufacturers.

## Militarisms Hostages

Do our “Defense Departments” really defend us? Absolutely not! Their very title is a lie. The military-industrial complex



Figure 36: The 15 megaton explosion detonated by the United States at Bikini Atoll in 1954 produced lasting biological damage to humans and animals living on the distant Marshall Islands. Today, half a century later, the islanders still experience radiation sickness in the form of leukemia and birth defects. Source: [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com)

sells itself by claiming to defend civilians. It justifies vast and crippling budgets by this claim; but it is a fraud. For the military-industrial complex, the only goal is money and power. Civilians like ourselves are just hostages. We are expendable. We are pawns in the power game, the money game.

Nations possessing nuclear weapons threaten each other with “Mutually Assured Destruction”, which has the very appropriate acronym MAD. What does this mean? Does it mean that civilians are being protected? Not at all. Instead they are threatened with complete destruction. Civilians here play the role of hostages in the power games of their leaders.

A thermonuclear war today would be not only genocidal but also omnicidal. It would kill people of all ages, babies, children, young people, mothers, fathers and grandparents, without any regard whatever for guilt or innocence. Such a war would be the ultimate ecological catastrophe, destroying not only human civilization but also much of the biosphere.

There is much worry today about climate change, but an ecological catastrophe of equal or greater magnitude could be produced by a nuclear war. One can gain a small idea of what this would be like by thinking of the radioactive contamination that has made an area half the size of Italy near to Chernobyl permanently uninhabitable. It is too soon to know the full effects of the Fukushima disaster, but it appears that it will be comparable with Chernobyl.

The environmental effects of a nuclear war would be catastrophic. A war fought with hydrogen bombs would produce radioactive contamination of the kind that we have already experienced in the areas around Chernobyl and Fukushima and in the Marshall Islands, but on an enormously increased scale. We have to remember that the total explosive power

of the nuclear weapons in the world today is 500,000 times as great as the power of the bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. What is threatened by a nuclear war today is the complete breakdown of human civilization.

Besides spreading deadly radioactivity throughout the world, a nuclear war would inflict catastrophic damage on global agriculture. Firestorms in burning cities would produce many millions of tons of black, thick, radioactive smoke. The smoke would rise to the stratosphere where it would spread around the earth and remain for a decade. Prolonged cold, decreased sunlight and rainfall, and massive increases in harmful ultraviolet light would shorten or eliminate growing seasons, producing a nuclear famine. Even a small nuclear war could endanger the lives of the billion people who today are chronically undernourished. A full-scale war fought with hydrogen bombs would mean that most humans would die from hunger. Many animal and plant species would also be threatened with extinction.

Incidents in which global disaster is avoided by a hairs breadth are constantly occurring. For example, on the night of 26 September, 1983, Lt. Col. Stanislav Petrov, a young software engineer, was on duty at a surveillance center near Moscow. Suddenly the screen in front of him turned bright red. An alarm went off. Its enormous piercing sound filled the room. A second alarm followed, and then a third, fourth and fifth, until the noise was deafening. The computer showed that the Americans had launched a strike against Russia. Petrov's orders were to pass the information up the chain of command to Secretary General Yuri Andropov. Within minutes, a nuclear counterattack would be launched. However, because of certain inconsistent features of the alarm, Petrov disobeyed orders and reported it as a computer error, which indeed it was. Most of us probably owe our lives to his brave

and cool headed decision and his knowledge of software systems. The narrowness of this escape is compounded by the fact that Petrov was on duty only because of the illness of another officer with less knowledge of software, who would have accepted the alarm as real.

There is a danger that our world, with all the beauty and value that it contains, will be destroyed by this cynical game for power and money, in which civilians are militarisms hostages. Will we let this happen?

## **Searching for Enemies**

Because the world spends roughly two trillion dollars each year on armaments, it follows that very many people make their living from war. This is the reason why it is correct to speak of war as a social, political and economic institution, and also one of the main reasons why war persists, although everyone realizes that it is the cause of much of the suffering of humanity.

We know that war is madness, but it persists. We know that it threatens the survival of our species, but it persists, entrenched in the attitudes of historians, newspaper editors and television producers, entrenched in the methods by which politicians finance their campaigns, and entrenched in the financial power of arms manufacturers — entrenched also in the ponderous and costly hardware of war, the fleets of warships, bombers, tanks, nuclear missiles and so on.

In his farewell address, US President Dwight D. Eisenhower warned his nation against the excessive power that had been acquired during World War II by the military-industrial complex.

Eisenhower's words echoed those of another US President, George Washington, who warned against overgrown Military

## Establishments

The military-industrial complex needs enemies. Without them it would wither. Thus at the end of the Second World War, this vast power complex was faced with a crisis, but it was saved by the discovery of a new enemy, communism. However, at the end of the Cold War there was another terrible crisis for the military establishment, the arms manufacturers and their supporters in research, government and the mass media. People spoke of the “peace dividend”, i.e., constructive use of the two trillion dollars that the world wastes each year on armaments. However, just in time, the military-industrial complex was saved from the nightmare of the “peace dividend” by the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington.

No matter that the attacks were crimes committed by individuals rather than acts of war, crimes against which police action rather than military action would have been appropriate. The Bush Administration (and CNN, Fox, etc.) quickly proclaimed that a state of war existed, and that the rules of war were in effect. The Cold War was replaced with the “War on Terror”.

To a large extent, this over-reaction to the events of 9/11/2001 can be interpreted in terms of the needs of the military-industrial complex against which Eisenhower had warned. Without a state of war and without enemies, this vast conglomerate of organizations and pressure groups would have languished.

If the aim of the “War on Terror” had been to rid the world of the threat of terrorism, acts like illegal assassination using drones would have been counterproductive, since they create many more terrorists than they destroy. But since the real aim is to produce a state of perpetual war, thus increasing the profits of the military-industrial com-



plex, such methods are the best imaginable. Urinating on Afghan corpses or burning the Koran or murderous night-time raids on civilian homes also help to promote the real goal, perpetual war.

For those who belong to the military-industrial complex, perpetual war is a blessing, but for the majority of the people of the world it is a curse. Since we who oppose war are the vast majority, can we not make our wills felt?

War was always madness, always immoral, always the cause of unspeakable suffering, economic waste and widespread destruction, and always a source of poverty, hate, barbarism and endless cycles of revenge and counter-revenge. It has always been a crime for soldiers to kill people, just as it is a crime for murderers in civil society to kill people. No flag has ever been wide enough to cover up the atrocities of war.

But today, the development of all-destroying thermonuclear weapons has put war completely beyond the bounds of sanity and elementary humanity.

Can we not rid ourselves of both nuclear weapons and the institution of war itself? We must act quickly and resolutely before our beautiful world is reduced to radioactive ashes, together with everything that we love.



# Famine, Disease and War

## Malthus' "Essay on the Principle of Population"

T.R. Malthus *Essay on The Principle of Population*, the first edition of which was published in 1798, was one of the first systematic studies of the problem of population in relation to resources. Earlier discussions of the problem had been published by Boterrio in Italy, Robert Wallace in England, and Benjamin Franklin in America. However, Malthus' "Essay" was the first to stress the fact that, in general, powerful checks operate continuously to keep human populations from increasing beyond their available food supply. In a later edition, published in 1803, he buttressed this assertion with carefully collected demographic and sociological data from many societies at various periods of their histories.

The publication of Malthus' "Essay" coincided with a wave of disillusionment which followed the optimism of the Enlightenment. The utopian societies predicted by the philosophers of the Enlightenment were compared with reign of terror in Robespierre's France and with the miseries of industrial workers in England; and the discrepancy required an explanation.

The optimism which preceded the French Revolution, and the disappointment which followed a few years later, closely paralleled the optimistic expectations of our own century, in the period after the Second World War, when it was thought that the transfer of technology to the less developed parts of the world would eliminate poverty, and the subsequent disappointment when poverty persisted.

Science and technology developed rapidly in the second half of the twentieth century, but the benefits which they conferred were just as rapidly consumed by a global population which today is increasing at the rate of one billion people every fourteen years. Because of the close parallel between the optimism and disappointments of Malthus time and those of our own, much light can be thrown on our present situation by rereading the debate between Malthus and his contemporaries.

## **Famine, Disease and War**

Malthus classified the checks to population growth as “preventative” and “positive”. Among the preventative checks he mentioned late marriage, and what he called “vice”. This included birth control, of which he disapproved. If he had been living today, I think that Malthus would consider birth control to be the most humane method for preventing excessive growth of population.

Among the positive checks to population growth, are the three terrible Malthusian forces, famine, disease and war. Today, each of these has taken on new and terrifying dimensions.

## **The Climate Emergency**

The threat of catastrophic climate change came to the attention of scientists after the time of Malthus. However, this existential threat to the future of human civilization is connected to Malthus work by the fact that one of the driving forces behind climate change is population growth. Furthermore, climate change contributes to threats from famine, disease and war.



Figure 37: A starving child in Somalia.



Figure 38: One of a series of prints which the German artist Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945) made as a protest against the atrocities of World War I.



Figure 39: The peoples of the world must revolt against the endless wars of their governments. All-destroying modern weapons have made the institution of war prohibitively dangerous.

## **Our Footprint on Nature's Face Has Grown Too Large**

At present, the total human economy is demanding more from the environment than the environment can regenerate. If we go on with business as usual, then within a decade it would take two Earths to regenerate the resources that we collectively demand. Most economists are focused on growth, but endless growth of anything physical on a finite planet is a logical impossibility. We need a new economic system, a new social contract, and a new and more considerate relationship with our environment.

### **Famine Today**

I have for decades been predicting that by 2050, population growth, climate change, and the end of the fossil fuel era would combine to produce a severe and widespread global famine, involving billions rather than millions of people. However, population has grown faster than predicted, reaching 8 billion in November, 2022. Climate change has also developed more rapidly than predicted. Already today drought is threatening agriculture in many parts of the world, and heat is damaging crops. Food prices have risen dramatically during the last few years, and a considerable fraction of the world's population is already experiencing food insecurity. According to the United Nations, in 2020, 40 percent of the world's population could not afford a healthy diet.

### **Disease Today**

The last two years have been dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic, but other diseases, such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS,

malaria, water-borne diseases, and infection with worms continue to produce many millions of deaths every year. The World Health Organization needs money to combat these diseases, but instead the world continues to spend immense amounts of money on war. Currently 2 trillion dollars are spent every year on armaments, and the total amount spent on war is much larger.

## **War Today**

Today the United States is waging a proxy war against Russia, with Ukraine as the battle-ground. Simultaneously the US is threatening China. In both cases, there is a great danger that nuclear weapons may be used.

War was always madness, always immoral, always the cause of unspeakable suffering, economic waste and widespread destruction, and always a source of poverty, hate, barbarism and endless cycles of revenge and counter-revenge. It has always been a crime for soldiers to kill people, just as it is a crime for murderers in civil society to kill people.

But today, the development of all-destroying thermonuclear weapons has put war completely beyond the bounds of sanity and elementary humanity. A thermonuclear war would destroy human civilization, together with most of the plants and animals with which we share the gift of life. We must strive to abolish not only nuclear weapons but also the institution of war itself.

## **A Freely Downloadable Book**

I would like to announce the publication of a book which deals in detail with the issues discussed above. It may be downloaded free of charge from the following link:



<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2022/08/Famine-Disease-and-War-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

# The Threat of a Large-Scale Famine

## **Disasters Threaten Human Civilization**

Among the greatest dangers to human civilization are nuclear war and catastrophic climate change, dangers which also threaten the biosphere. In addition to these two existential threats, humans also face the threat of an extremely large-scale famine, involving billions of people, rather than millions. The beginning of this famine, which could involve much of the world's population by 2050, can already be seen.

## **Food Prices Have Exploded Because of the Ukraine War**

Because, in normal circumstances, both Ukraine and Russia are very large exporters of grain, the war in Ukraine has caused food prices to increase drastically in every part of the world. The United Nations is greatly concerned with the effect that this will have on poor countries.

## **Fossil Fuel Inputs to Agriculture**

Modern high-yield agriculture requires very large inputs of fossil fuels. In their book, "Food, Land, Population and the US Economy". Researchers David Pimental and Mario Giampietro point out that in the United States, the growing and marketing of food requires roughly ten fossil fuels calories for every food calorie. By 2050, supplies of petroleum and natural gas will be exhausted, and in any case, the use of fossil fuels must stop very quickly if we are to have a chance

of avoiding catastrophic climate change. Thus, high-yield modern agriculture will become impossible by the middle of the present century. This is particularly true of the Green Revolution grain varieties on which India is currently dependent.

## **Predictions of Drought**

Many western and mid-western parts of the United States are already severely affected by drought, this situation is predicted to become worse because of increasing temperatures due to climate change. The same is true in many parts of the world, for example in eastern Africa, the Middle East, and some parts of southern Europe. The loss of agricultural output in these regions due to drought is a threat to food security.

## **Falling Water Tables**

Falling water tables in China were the reason why China instituted its one-child policy. China has experienced many disastrous famines in the past. In the late 20th century, the Chinese government saw that water tables were falling at an alarming rate, and fearing another famine, they tried to halt their population growth by instituting a one-child policy.

In other parts of the world, water tables are also falling rapidly. For example, in the United States, the great Ogallala Aquifer is being overdrawn by a factor of eight. This enormous, shallow aquifer underlies portions of eight states.

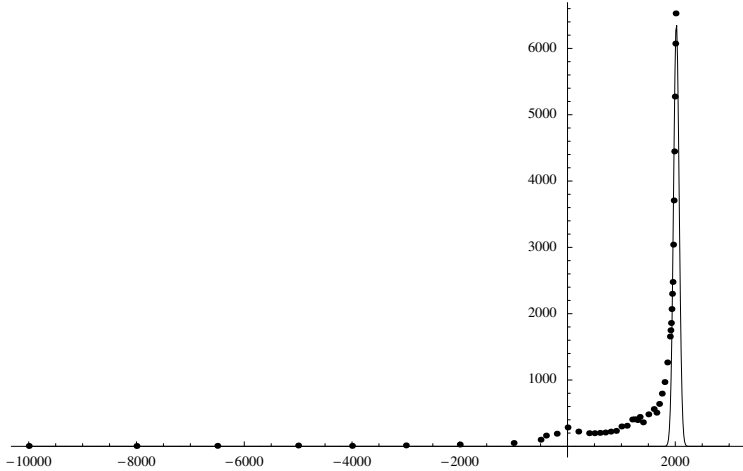


Figure 40: Population growth and fossil fuel use, seen on a time-scale of several thousand years. The dots are population estimates in millions from the US Census Bureau. Fossil fuel use appears as a spike-like curve, rising from almost nothing to a high value, and then falling again to almost nothing in the space of a few centuries. When the two curves are plotted together, the explosive rise of global population is seen to be simultaneous with, and perhaps partially driven by, the rise of fossil fuel use. This raises the question of whether the world's population is headed for a crash when the fossil fuel era has ended. (Author's own graph)



Figure 41: **Whitechuck Glacier in the North Cascades National Park in 1973.** (Nicholas College)

## Melting Glaciers

Glaciers will soon cease to exist in many parts of the world, for example in the Himalayas and the Andes. Both India and China rely on Himalayan glaciers for their summer water supplies, and the loss of these glaciers will severely impact food security in both China and India. Similarly, a number of countries in South America rely on glaciers in the Andes.

## Rising Sea Levels

The melting of ice in the Arctic and Antarctic regions is producing sea level rise at an accelerating rate. In the Antarctic, spreading cracks in the vast Thwaites glacier make scientists worried that the glacier will shatter like a windscreen, and trigger the collapse of nearby glaciers. If this happens, sea levels could increase by a very large amount, threatening all



Figure 42: **The same glacier in 2006** (Nicholas College)

coastal cities. Even if this disaster is avoided, sea level rise will drown many fertile rice-producing regions in countries such as Bangladesh and Vietnam,

## Population Stabilization

If the global population is plotted as a function of time over a very long period, from neolithic times until the present, and if the use of fossil fuels is plotted on the same graph, the two curves are seen to rise suddenly and dramatically together. This raises several questions: Has the human population explosion been partially driven by the use of fossil fuels? Will the population of humans crash disastrously when fossil fuels are exhausted or prohibited?

In any case, as Malthus pointed out, no population can exceed its food supply.

# Homo Sapiens?

## A Book Announcement

Humans, in their arrogance, call themselves not just “Homo sapiens”, but “Homo sapiens sapiens”, the “wisest of the wise”! Admittedly, our species has enormous technical and scientific progress to its credit, as well as great cultural achievements.

But wisdom? Wisdom is another matter entirely. Our suicidal wars against nature and against each other can hardly be called wise. I would like to announce the publication of a book which explores the reasons for our collective lack of wisdom, and the steps that we must take to save ourselves from the dangers that we have created.

The book may be downloaded free of charge from the following link:

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2022/05/Homo-sapiens-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## The Insanity of Nuclear War

War was always madness, always immoral, always the cause of unspeakable suffering, economic waste and widespread destruction, and always a source of poverty, hate, barbarism and endless cycles of revenge and counter-revenge. It has always been a crime for soldiers to kill people, just as it is a crime for murderers in civil society to kill people. No flag has ever been wide enough to cover up atrocities.

But today, the development of all-destroying thermonuclear weapons has put war completely beyond the bounds of sanity and elementary humanity

Just as the leaders who started World War I had no imaginative idea of what it would be like, so our current leaders seem not to understand what a war with thermonuclear weapons would be like. During the Cold War, driven by collective paranoia, enough nuclear weapons were produced to destroy human civilization entirely, together with much of the biosphere. The collective explosive power of these warheads was equivalent to 20,000,000,000 tons of TNT, i.e., 4 tons for every man, woman and child on the planet.

Expressed differently, the explosive power of these weapons was roughly a million times greater than the power of the bombs that produced the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Today, the existing nuclear weapons have only half a million times the power of the bombs that devastated the two Japanese cities. But this does not change the fact that a thermonuclear war would destroy human civilization, together with most of the plants and animals with which we share the gift of life.

Research has shown that fire-storms produced by a nuclear war would send vast quantities of smoke into the atmosphere, blocking sunlight, and blocking the hydrological cycle. The climate would become very cold for a period of about ten years. Human agriculture would fail. Plants and animals would also be killed by the nuclear winter.

## **Ukraine and the Threat of Nuclear War**

Besides illegally and brutally invading Ukraine, Russia's Vladimir Putin has put Russian nuclear forces on high alert, thus threatening the world with nuclear war.





Figure 43: Picasso's famous painting *Guernica* was a protest following the Nazi bombing of civilians in a Basque town.



Figure 44: The nuclear arms race casts a dark shadow over the future of human civilization and the biosphere.

## **Sacrificing the Earth for the Sake of the Economy**

Humans tend to see what is near to them more clearly than what is far away. The basic problem in mobilizing political will to address the climate emergency is that immediate action is urgently needed, but the worst effects of catastrophic climate change lie in the distant future. What every nation seems to do is to give its economy higher priority than the urgent need to save the earth. If we fail to prevent catastrophic climate change, most of the earth's surface will become uninhabitable, and the global population of humans will be correspondingly reduced, no doubt with much conflict. Is this wisdom?

## **We Need Wisdom before It Is Too Late**

Our species urgently needs wisdom to save us from the danger that our arrogance and folly have created. Can we not try to save ourselves by actually becoming *Homo sapiens*?



Figure 45: Senator Bernie Sanders, the popular candidate for the US Presidency in 2016 and 2020, says that he is a socialist. When asked to explain this in detail, Senator Sanders said that he believes that the United States would benefit from a social system similar to the systems in present-day Scandinavia.

## Social Systems In Scandinavia

### Bernie Sanders, a Democratic Socialist

Senator Bernie Sanders (Independent, Vermont) describes himself as a democratic socialist. When asked to explain in more detail what he means by this, he says that he believes that the United States would benefit from having a social system more like those found in the Scandinavian countries.



**Figure 46: A day-care center in Sweden. In the Scandinavian countries, most women work, and state-provided day-care centers for pre-school children make this possible.**

## **The Danish Political and Social System**

I have lived and worked in Denmark for the last half century, teaching at the University of Copenhagen until my retirement, and I am married to a Danish wife. This gives me some knowledge of the way that the social system works in Denmark, and I will try to describe it for you.

Denmark has a market economy, with private corporations, but it also has cooperatives, owned by the users. The main thing that distinguishes Denmark from a country like the United States is the very high and steeply progressive rate of taxation. Because rich people are taxed so extremely heavily, it is difficult for anyone to become very rich. Everyone in Denmark is moderately well off. Poverty has been virtually eliminated by social programs, and the contrast between people with high incomes and those less well paid is

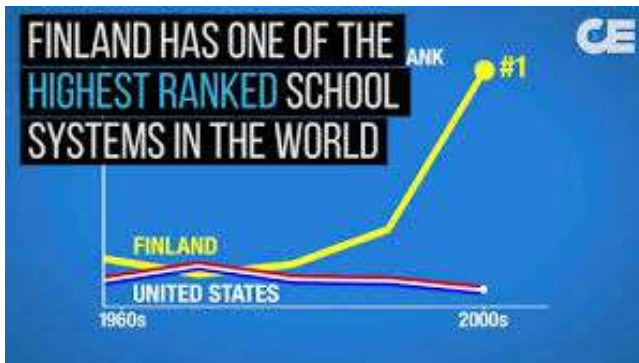


Figure 47: Finland has the best school system in the world. One reason for this is that the teachers are very highly selected and highly paid. Another reason is that the children are given frequent short rest periods, during which they may go outdoors and breath fresh air. They return from these small breaks with improved concentration.



Figure 48: The long-serving Danish Prime Minister Thorvald Stauning (1873-1942). He was the architect of the Danish social and economic system, which combines a free-market economy with such social benefits as universal free health care, state-provided day-care centers and free higher education. Thanks to Stauning's initiatives, those who qualify for college or university in Denmark are not only given free tuition, but also a stipend to support their living expenses. A high progressive income tax in Denmark pays for these benefits and reduces economic inequality. Stauning forged a coalition that united both labor and employers behind his reforms.

very small.

In return for the high taxes that they pay, the Danish people receive many benefits. Visits to doctors are free and hospitalization is also free. Those young people who qualify for higher education are not only given free tuition, but also an allowance on which to live while studying.

There is almost complete equality between men and women in Denmark. Almost all Danish women expect to work at jobs outside the home. To make this possible, the state provides free day care centers for infants, and free after-school-activities centers for older children, where they learn hand-crafts or go on tours.

## **Ecology in Denmark**

Denmark is the world leader in the design and manufacture and export of modern windmills. Denmark also has ambitious climate goals. The country aims to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 70% by 2030 and to net zero by 2050. Danes realize that their country is a small one, but they want to lead by example.

## **Other Scandinavian Countries**

The other Scandinavian countries, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland, have social systems very similar to that of Denmark. Finland is especially distinguished by having the best school system in the world. In Iceland, complete freedom of expression is written into the constitution, together with freedom from any kind of censorship.

## Benefits of Equality

All of the Scandinavian countries are characterized by a large degree of economic equality, and this benefits them in several ways.

The English economist and Fabian, John Atkinson Hobson (1858-1940), offered a famous explanation of the colonial era in his book “Imperialism: A Study” (1902). According to Hobson, the basic problem that led to colonial expansion was an excessively unequal distribution of incomes in the industrialized countries. The result of this unequal distribution was that neither the rich nor the poor could buy back the total output of their society. The incomes of the poor were insufficient, and the rich were too few in number. The rich had finite needs, and tended to reinvest their money. As Hobson pointed out, reinvestment in new factories only made the situation worse by increasing output.

Hobson had been sent as a reporter by the Manchester Guardian to cover the Second Boer War. His experiences had convinced him that colonial wars have an economic motive. Such wars are fought, he believed, to facilitate investment of the excess money of the rich in African or Asian plantations and mines, and to make possible the overseas sale of excess manufactured goods. Hobson believed imperialism to be immoral, since it entails suffering both among colonial peoples and among the poor of the industrial nations. The cure that he recommended was a more equal distribution of incomes in the manufacturing countries.

In a splendid lecture entitled *How economic inequality harms societies*, the social epidemiologist Richard Wilkinson demonstrated that there is almost no correlation between gross national product and a number of indicators of the quality of life, such as physical health, mental health,



drug abuse, education, imprisonment, obesity, social mobility, trust, violence, teenage pregnancies and child well-being. On the other hand he offered comprehensive statistical evidence that these indicators are strongly correlated with the degree of inequality within countries, the outcomes being uniformly much better in nations where income is more equally distributed.

## **Happiness in Scandinavia**

Studies based on interviews consistently rank Scandinavian countries as the happiest in the world. In 2020 the top three positions were held by Finland, Iceland and Denmark.

## **Bernie Is Right**

All this shows that Bernie Sanders is right when he says that the United States would benefit from having a social system more like those found in Scandinavia.

# Eliminating the Causes of War

## **A New Freely Downloadable Book**

I would like to announce the publication of a new book, which discusses the causes of war, and how they may be eliminated. The book may be downloaded and circulated free of charge from the following link:

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2022/04/Eliminating-the-causes-of-war-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## **The Danger of Nuclear War**

War was always madness, always immoral, always the cause of unspeakable suffering, economic waste and widespread destruction, and always a source of poverty, hate, barbarism and endless cycles of revenge and counter-revenge. It has always been a crime for soldiers to kill people, just as it is a crime for murderers in civil society to kill people. No flag has ever been wide enough to cover up atrocities.

But today, the development of all-destroying thermonuclear weapons has put war completely beyond the bounds of sanity and elementary humanity.

Can we not rid ourselves of both nuclear weapons and the institution of war itself? We must act quickly and resolutely before our beautiful world is reduced to radioactive ashes, together with everything that we love.

## Population Pressure and War

Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834) is famous for his studies of the social effects of population pressure. In his second “Essay on Population”, published in 1803, Malthus looked at all the societies then known through the accounts of historians and explorers.

In most of the societies which Malthus described, a causal link can be seen, not only between population pressure and poverty, but also between population pressure and war. As one reads his “Essay”, it becomes clear why both these terrible sources of human anguish saturate so much of history, and why efforts to eradicate them have so often met with failure: The only possible way to eliminate poverty and war is to reduce the pressure of population by preventive checks, such as birth control or late marriage, since the increased food supply produced by occasional cultural advances can give only very temporary relief.

## Tribalism and Nationalism

Human emotional nature has not changed much since our ancestors lived in small, genetically-homogeneous tribes, competing with other tribes for territory on the grasslands of Africa. In this situation, the tribe as a whole was the unit upon which the Darwinian forces of natural selection acted. The whole tribe either survived or else perished in wars with competing tribes.

In such a situation, heroic self-sacrifice in war makes sense. If the tribe survives, the genes of the individual who died for his tribe will be passed on into the future by other tribal members who carry the same genes.

Today we all still have the emotions which make war possible, but these emotions are amplified by mass commu-

nication into love for a particular nation. Unfortunately, patriotic citizens are not only willing to die for their nation; they are also willing to kill those designated as enemies.

## **Military-Industrial Complexes**

In his farsighted Farewell Address, U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower warned against the dangers of the military-industrial complex. Today, the world spends roughly two trillion dollars every year on armaments, This vast river of money, almost too great to be imagined, means that many people are making a living from war. It is the reason why war can be thought of as a social institution. It is one of the main reasons why war persists, although everyone knows that war is the source of much of the suffering that afflicts humanity

## **Resource Wars**

Many of the wars that plague the world today can be seen as resource wars. As populations grow, together with consumer demand, powerful nations compete for the limited and dwindling supply of natural resources. Wars in the Middle East, for example, would hardly have destroyed the region to such an extent if it had not been rich in oil and natural gas. It is predicted that many future wars will be centered on the right to water resources.

## **International Law**

One of the chapters in the book deals with the history of international law, from Hammurabis Code and the Magna Carta to more recent developments, such as the Treaty on



Figure 49: Lord Denning described the Magna Carta as “the greatest constitutional document of all times: the foundation of the freedom of the individual against the arbitrary authority of the despot”.

the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which is a great achievement, despite being opposed by all the nuclear weapons states and their allies.

## Reforming the United Nations

After the unspeakable horrors of World War II, delegates from 50 Allied nations met in San Francisco California. The purpose of the conference, which took place between 25 April and 26 June, 1945, was to set up an international organization that would be able to abolish the institution of war.

Article 2.4 of the United Nations Charter requires that “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.” Thus, the purpose of the United Nations was and is to abolish the institution of war. However, the Charter which the delegates produced was too weak to achieve this goal. The United

Nations, in its present form is a confederation, rather than federation. It lacks the key power of federations, the power to make laws that are binding on individuals.

## A World Federation

To make it equal to the great task of abolishing the institution of war, the United Nations must be strengthened by giving it the powers of a federation. The essential difference between a confederation and a federation, both of them unions of states, is that a federation has the power to make and to enforce laws that act on individuals, rather than attempting to coerce states.

Other reforms are also needed: If the UN is to become an effective World Federation, it will need a reliable source of income to make the organization less dependent on wealthy countries, which tend to give support only to those interventions of which they approve. In fact the present income of the United Nations is laughably small in comparison to the tasks that are given to it. The income of the United Nations, strengthened and converted to a World Federation, should be increased by a factor of many hundreds.

Historically, the federal form of government has proved to be extremely robust and successful. Many of today's nations are federations of smaller, partially autonomous, member states. Among these nations are Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Germany, India, Mexico, Switzerland, Spain, South Africa and the United States.



Figure 50: The Nobel Laureate economist James Tobin proposed that a very small tax be imposed on currency exchange rates. His aim in this proposal was to stabilize exchange rates and stop excessive speculation. When asked what to do with the money, he said, almost as an afterthought, “Let the United Nations have it.” In fact, the amount of money involved in currency exchanges is so enormous that even the small tax proposed by Tobin would be enough to solve all of the U.N.’s financial problems and to enable the organization to meet the challenges with which it is faced today.





# The Urgent Need For Climate Action

## Climate Disaster Seems a Distant Threat

One reason that the Glasgow Climate conference failed so miserably to produce urgently needed climate action was that humans tend to react to what is close to them. Money to pay the rent is urgent, while a climate catastrophe seems to be a distant threat.

## Cultural Inertia

A second reason is cultural inertia. All of us find it very difficult to make rapid changes in our lifestyles. Our educational and political systems also change very slowly. Automobile factories take a long time to build, and they continue to produce petroleum-driven vehicles. Many people earn their livings from the fossil fuel industry.

## Avoiding Climate Disaster Is a Global Problem

Finally, avoiding a climate catastrophe is an international problem. Historically, industrialized countries have been responsible for most of the greenhouse gas emissions, and people in less developed countries, such as India, feel that they therefore have a right to use their abundant coal to raise the standard of living and to combat poverty.

## Warnings from the Antarctic and Arctic Regions

Although the worst effects of catastrophic climate change lie in the distant future, there are recent warnings that tell us that a climate disaster may be nearer than we thought. The Arctic and Antarctic regions are warming more than twice as fast as the remainder of the world. In the Antarctic region, the vast Thwaites glacier, sometimes called “the Doomsday Glacier”, has recently exhibited so many cracks that scientists fear that it may shatter into small pieces like a windscreen. If this happens, the event may trigger the collapse of other nearby glaciers through a mechanism called “Marine Ice Cliff Instability”. This could mean several meters of sea level rise, threatening all coastal cities throughout the world.

Other warnings come from the Arctic. For example, a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit was recorded at the Siberian town of Verkhovansk, 70 kilometers north of the Arctic Circle, and this reading has been confirmed by the World Meteorological Organization. Such a temperature would be more appropriate for Spain or Italy.

Observers on top of the Greenland ice sheet can see water pouring from summer lakes into crevasses that reach all the way to the bottom of the sheet. This water acts as a lubricant, speeding the flow of the entire ice sheet towards the sea.

The Arctic Ocean will soon be entirely ice-free during one or two months of the year. This will initiate a feedback loop involving the albedo effect: Ice reflects sunlight, while dark sea water absorbs heat from the sun, leading to further warming of the Arctic Ocean.

Another serious warning comes from the International

Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The most recent IPCC report warns us that without urgent action, climate change may soon be beyond our ability to adapt.

## **The Keeling Curve**

The Keeling Curve measures the atmospheric concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> at the Mount Loa observatory in Hawaii. The concentration passed 400 parts per million in 2013, and it is not only still rising but rising at an accelerated rate. Scientists say that the CO<sub>2</sub> concentration level has not been this high for at least 2 million years.

## **What Will Happen if We Fail?**

What will happen if we fail in our efforts to avoid catastrophic climate change? Then, in the long run, most of the earth's surface will become uninhabitable. Many species of plants and animals, unable to move, will become extinct. Humans may survive, but the global population of humans will be very much reduced by heat death, famine and wars.

## **We Need Urgent and Radical Action**

For all these reasons, it is urgent that we take drastic climate action while there is still time to do so.

Let us remember Greta Thunberg's words, "We need hope, of course we do, but the one thing that we need more than hope is action. Once we start to act, hope is everywhere."

So let us act with urgency, for the sake of future generations, and for the sake of our beautiful planet.

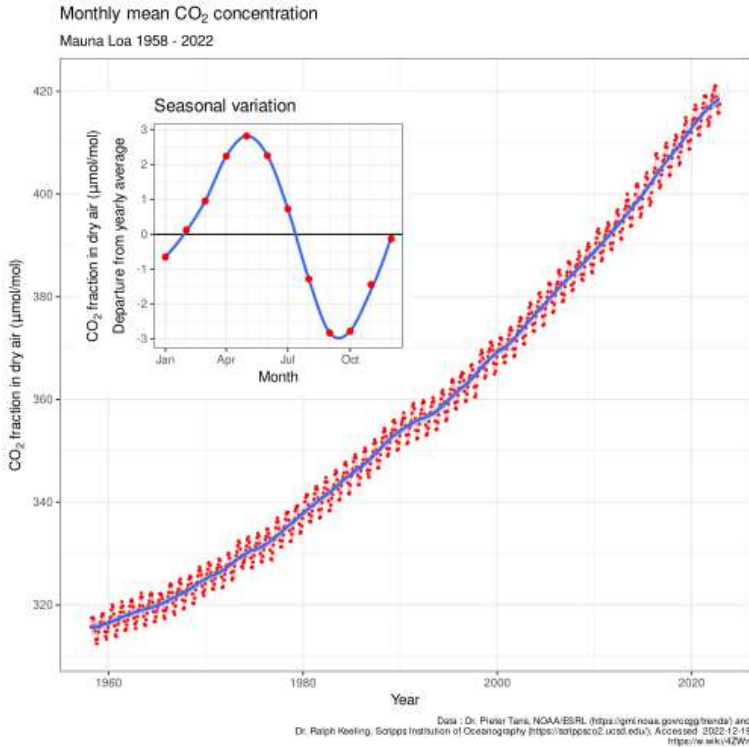


Figure 51: Atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) concentrations from 1958 to 2022. Despite promises made at various international conferences, the atmospheric concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> continues to increase, and is even increasing at an accelerated rate.



Figure 52: “Ensuring a livable planet for future generations means getting serious about phasing out coal, oil, and gas,” said Christiana Figueres, former executive secretary of the UNFCCC, “Countries such as Costa Rica, Spain, and New Zealand are already showing the way forward, with policies to constrain exploration and extraction and ensure a just transition away from fossil fuels. Others must now follow their lead.”



Figure 53: Swedish teen environmental activist Greta Thunberg speaks at a climate change rally in Charlotte, North Carolina, on 8 November, 2019. Returning to Europe by boat to attend climate talks in Spain, Greta said “My message to the Americans is the same as to everyone - that is to unite behind the science and to act on the science. We must realize this is a crisis, and we must do what we can now to spread awareness about this and to put pressure on the people in power. And especially, the US has an election coming up soon, and it’s very important that for everyone who can vote, vote. Even if the politics needed doesn’t exist today, we still need to use our voices to make sure that the people in power are focused on the right things. Because this is a democracy, and in a democracy, people are the ones who run the country. I know it doesn’t seem that way, but if enough people were to decide they have had enough, then that could change everything. So don’t underestimate that power.”

## What actions must we take?

1. The extraction of fossil fuels must stop. Currently China and India make massive use of coal. Countries such as Russia and Saudi Arabia extract and export oil and natural gas. The Canadian Tar Sands project contributes enormously to greenhouse gas emissions. In the United States, the Biden Administration, although pledged to climate action, auctions off petroleum drilling rights , both offshore and in the Arctic.

2. Subsidies for fossil fuel corporations must stop. A recent report found that these corporations received 5.9 trillion dollars in subsidies in 2020.

3. Renewable energy projects must be encouraged and supported. The Green New Deal visualises governmental action analogous to FDRs New Deal to build urgently needed renewable energy structure. Renewable energy is now generally cheaper than energy derived from fossil fuels, but governmental help is still needed.

# We Must Abolish Nuclear Weapons

## Russia Threatens Nuclear War

In addition to illegally invading Ukraine, Russian leaders have put their nuclear forces on high alert, thus illegally threatening nuclear war. This recent crisis emphasizes the urgent need for the world to somehow rid itself of nuclear weapons before human civilization is destroyed by them, together with much of the biosphere. This will be an extremely difficult task, but we must not fail. It is a matter of life or death.

The deep and inventive human mind, which has seen into the heart of the atom, must not fail when confronted with the task of establishing global political unity.

## Flaws in the Concept of Nuclear Deterrence

Before discussing other defects in the concept of deterrence, it must be said very clearly that the idea of “massive nuclear retaliation” is completely unacceptable from an ethical point of view. The doctrine of retaliation, performed on a massive scale, violates not only the principles of common human decency and common sense, but also the ethical principles of every major religion.

Retaliation is especially contrary to the central commandment of Christianity which tells us to love our neighbor, even if he or she is far away from us, belonging to a different ethnic or political group, and even if our distant neighbor has seriously injured us.



This principle has a fundamental place not only in Christianity but also in Buddhism. “Massive retaliation” completely violates these very central ethical principles, which are not only clearly stated and fundamental but also very practical, since they prevent escalating cycles of revenge and counter-revenge.

Contrast Christian ethics with estimates of the number of deaths that would follow a US nuclear strike against Russia: Several hundred million deaths. These horrifying estimates shock us not only because of the enormous magnitude of the expected mortality, but also because the victims would include people of every kind: women, men, old people, children and infants, completely irrespective of any degree of guilt that they might have. As a result of such an attack, many millions of people in neutral countries would also die. This type of killing has to be classified as genocide.

When a suspected criminal is tried for a wrongdoing, great efforts are devoted to clarifying the question of guilt or innocence. Punishment only follows if guilt can be proved beyond any reasonable doubt. Contrast this with the totally indiscriminate mass slaughter that results from a nuclear attack!

It might be objected that disregard for the guilt or innocence of victims is a universal characteristic of modern war, since statistics show that, with time, a larger and larger percentage of the victims have been civilians, and especially children. For example, the air attacks on Coventry during World War II, or the fire bombings of Dresden and Tokyo, produced massive casualties which involved all segments of the population with complete disregard for the question of guilt or innocence. The answer, I think, is that modern war has become generally unacceptable from an ethical point of view, and this unacceptability is epitomized in nuclear weapons.

The enormous and indiscriminate destruction produced by nuclear weapons formed the background for an historic 1996 decision by the International Court of Justice in The Hague. In response to questions put to it by the WHO and the UN General Assembly, the Court ruled that

“the threat and use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and particularly the principles and rules of humanitarian law.”

Having said these important things, we can now turn to some of the other defects in the concept of nuclear deterrence. One important defect is that nuclear war may occur through accident or miscalculation through technical defects or human failings. This possibility is made greater by the fact that despite the end of the Cold War, thousands of missiles carrying nuclear warheads are still kept on a hair-trigger state of alert with a quasi-automatic reaction time measured in minutes.

There is a constant danger that a nuclear war will be triggered by error in evaluating the signal on a radar screen. For example, the BBC reported recently that a group of scientists and military leaders are worried that a small asteroid entering the earth's atmosphere and exploding could trigger a nuclear war if mistaken for a missile strike.

A number of prominent political and military figures, many of whom have ample knowledge of the system of deterrence, having been part of it, have expressed concern about the danger of accidental nuclear war. Colin S. Grey (Chairman, National Institute for Public Policy) expressed this concern as follows:

“The problem, indeed the enduring problem, is that we are resting our future upon a nuclear deterrence system concerning which we cannot tolerate even a single malfunction.”

General Curtis E. LeMay (Founder and former Commander in Chief of the United States Strategic Air Command) has written,

“In my opinion a general war will grow through a series of political miscalculations and accidents rather than through any deliberate attack by either side.”

Bruce G. Blair (Brookings Institute) has remarked that

“It is obvious that the rushed nature of the process, from warning to decision to action, risks causing a catastrophic mistake... This system is an accident waiting to happen.”

## Close Calls

Incidents in which global disaster is avoided by a hair's breadth are constantly occurring. For example, on the night of 26 September, 1983, Lt. Col. Stanislav Petrov, a young software engineer, was on duty at a surveillance center near Moscow. Suddenly the screen in front of him turned bright red.

An alarm went off. Its enormous piercing sound filled the room. A second alarm followed, and then a third, fourth and fifth. “The computer showed that the Americans had launched a strike against us”, Petrov remembered later. His orders were to pass the information up the chain of command to Secretary General Yuri Andropov. Within minutes, a nuclear counterattack would be launched. However, because of

certain inconsistent features of the alarm, Petrov disobeyed orders and reported it as a computer error, which indeed it was.

Most of us probably owe our lives to his cool headed decision and knowledge of software systems. The narrowness of this escape is compounded by the fact that Petrov was on duty only because of the illness of another officer with less knowledge of software, who would have accepted the alarm as real.

Narrow escapes such as this show us clearly how urgently we need to abolish nuclear weapons.

## **Nuclear Terrorism**

Since 1945, more than 3,000 metric tons (3,000,000 kilograms) of highly enriched uranium and plutonium have been produced - enough for several hundred thousand nuclear weapons. Of this, roughly a million kilograms are in Russia, inadequately guarded, in establishments where the technicians are poorly paid and vulnerable to the temptations of bribery. There is a continuing danger that these fissile materials will fall into the hands of terrorists, or organized criminals, or irresponsible governments. Also, an extensive black market for fissile materials, nuclear weapons components etc. has recently been revealed in connection with the confessions of Pakistan's bomb-maker, Dr. A.Q. Khan. Furthermore, if Pakistan's less-than-stable government should be overthrown, complete nuclear weapons could fall into the hands of terrorists.

## The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT)

In the 1960s, negotiations were started between countries that possessed nuclear weapons, and others that did not possess them, to establish a treaty that would prevent the spread of these highly dangerous weapons, but which would at the same time encourage cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The resulting treaty has the formal title “Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons” (abbreviated as the NPT). The Treaty also aimed at achieving general and complete disarmament. It was opened for signature in 1968, and it entered into force on the 11th of May, 1970.

The NPT has three main parts or “pillars”:

1. non-proliferation,
2. disarmament, and
3. the right to peaceful use of nuclear technology.

Articles I and II of the NPT forbid states that have nuclear weapons to help other nations to acquire them. These Articles were violated, for example, by France, which helped Israel to acquire nuclear weapons, and by China, which helped Pakistan to do the same. They are also violated by the “nuclear sharing” agreements, through which US tactical nuclear weapons will be transferred to several NATO countries in Europe in a crisis situation. It is sometimes argued that in the event of a crisis, the NPT would no longer be valid, but there is nothing in the NPT itself that indicates that it would not hold in all situations.

The most blatantly violated provision of the NPT is Article VI. It requires the member states to pursue “negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament”, and negotiations towards a “Treaty on general

and complete disarmament”. In other words, the states that possess nuclear weapons agreed to get rid of them. However, during the half century that has passed since the NPT went into force, the nuclear weapon states have shown absolutely no sign of complying with Article VI. There is a danger that the NPT will break down entirely because the majority of countries in the world are so dissatisfied with this long-continued non-compliance.

Looking at the NPT with the benefit of hindsight, we can see the third “pillar”, the “right to peaceful use of nuclear technology”, as a fatal flaw of the treaty. In practice, it has meant encouragement of nuclear power generation, with all the many dangers that go with it.

The enrichment of uranium is linked to reactor use. Many reactors of modern design make use of low enriched uranium as a fuel. Nations operating such a reactor may claim that they need a program for uranium enrichment in order to produce fuel rods. However, by operating their ultracentrifuge a little longer, they can easily produce highly enriched (weapons-usable) uranium. Furthermore, a byproduct of reactor use is weapons-usable plutonium.

## **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)**

On July 7, 2017, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted by an overwhelming majority (122 to 1) at the United Nations General Assembly. Although opposed by all of the nuclear weapon states, the treaty is a great achievement. Here are the first two articles of the treaty:

Article 1, Prohibitions: Each State Party undertakes never under any circumstances to:

(a) Develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;

(b) Transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosive devices directly or indirectly;

(c) Receive the transfer of or control over nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices directly or indirectly

(d) Use or threaten to use nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;

(e) Assist, encourage or induce, in any way, anyone to engage in any activity prohibited to a State Party under this Treaty;

(f) Seek or receive any assistance, in any way, from anyone to engage in any activity prohibited to a State Party under this Treaty;

(g) Allow any stationing, installation or deployment of any nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in its territory or at any place under its jurisdiction or control.

Article 2, Declarations: Each State Party shall submit to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, not later than 30 days after this Treaty enters into force for that State Party, a declaration in which it shall:

(a) Declare whether it owned, possessed or controlled nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices and eliminated its nuclear weapon programme, including the elimination or irreversible conversion of all nuclear weapons-related facilities, prior to the entry into force of this Treaty for that State Party;

(b) Notwithstanding Article 1 (a), declare whether it owns, possesses or controls any nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;

(c) Notwithstanding Article 1 (g), declare whether there

are any nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in its territory or in any place under its jurisdiction or control that are owned, possessed or controlled by another State.

## **Nuclear Weapons Are Criminal! Every War Is a Crime!**

War was always madness, always immoral, always the cause of unspeakable suffering, economic waste and widespread destruction, and always a source of poverty, hate, barbarism and endless cycles of revenge and counter-revenge. It has always been a crime for soldiers to kill people, just as it is a crime for murderers in civil society to kill people. No flag has ever been wide enough to cover up atrocities.

But today, the development of all-destroying nuclear weapons has put war completely beyond the bounds of sanity and elementary humanity.

Can we not rid ourselves of both nuclear weapons and the institution of war itself? We must act quickly and resolutely before our beautiful world and everything that we love are reduced to radioactive ashes.





Figure 54: After discussing the Bikini test and its radioactive fallout with Joseph Rotblat, Lord Russell became concerned for the future of the human gene pool if large numbers of such bombs should ever be used in a war. To warn humanity of the danger, he wrote what came to be known as the Russell-Einstein Manifesto. The document contains the words: “Here then is the problem that we present to you, stark and dreadful and inescapable: Shall we put an end to the human race, or shall mankind renounce war?... There lies before us, if we choose, continual progress in happiness, knowledge and wisdom. Shall we, instead, choose death because we cannot forget our quarrels? We appeal as human beings to human beings: Remember your humanity, and forget the rest.” Lord Russell devoted much of the remainder of his life to working for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Here he is seen in 1962 in Trafalgar Square, London, addressing a meeting of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

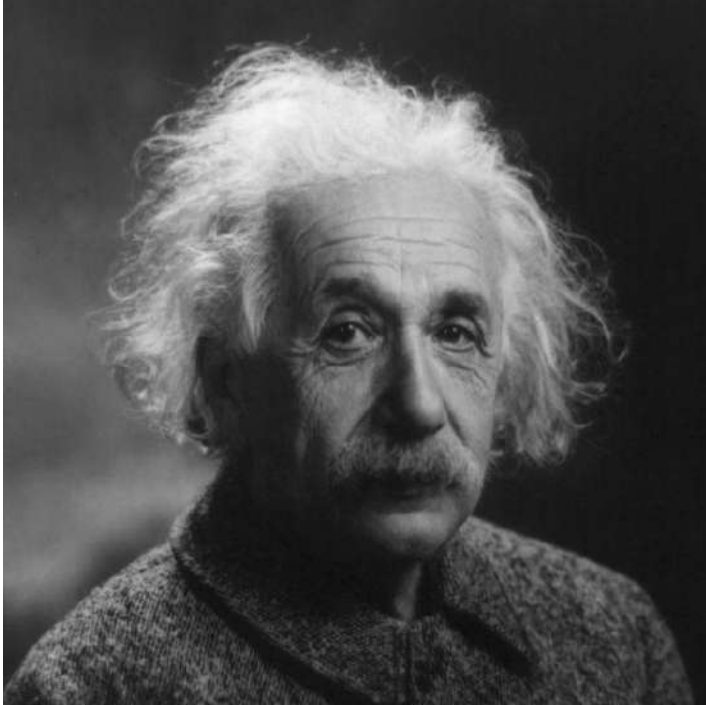


Figure 55: Albert Einstein wrote: “The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking, and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophes.” He also said, “I don’t know what will be used in the next world war, but the 4th will be fought with stones.”

# Corporations versus Democracy

## **A new freely downloadable book**

I would like to announce the publication of a new book, which discusses the ways in which giant corporations control both governments and media, thus undermining democracy. The book may be downloaded and circulated free of charge from the following link:

<https://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2022/02/Corporations-Versus-Democracy-by-John-Scales-Avery.pdf>

## **Corporate Oligarchy versus Democracy**

As Professor Noam Chomsky has pointed out, greed and lack of ethics are built into the structure of corporations. By law, the chief executive officer of a corporation must be entirely motivated by the collective greed of the stockholders. He must maximize profits. If the CEO abandons this single-minded chase after corporate profits for ethical reasons, or for the sake of humanity or the biosphere or the future, he (or she) must, by law, be fired and replaced. This being so, the enormous and universal power of corporate oligarchs undermines democracy. We do not have “government of the people, by the people and for the people”. We have “government of the people, by corrupt corporate politicians, and for corporate profits”.



Figure 56: Of the fossil fuels, all are bad, but coal is the worst.

## Giant Fossil Fuel Corporations and Catastrophic Climate Change

Giant fossil fuel corporations, such as Shell and Exxon and the coal corporations owned by the Koch brothers, knew as early as the 1970's that their products would lead to catastrophic climate change, but with shocking cynicism they employed advertising agencies to sow doubt concerning whether human activities affect the climate. Interestingly, the advertising agencies were the same as those employed by the tobacco industry to deny that smoking caused lung cancer, although they knew very well that it did. In the Christian religion, Greed is named as one of the seven deadly sins. Today, corporate greed is driving us towards disaster.



Figure 57: Network administrators have noticed that programs about climate change often have low viewer ratings. Since they see delivering high viewer ratings to their advertisers as their primary duty, these executives seldom allow programs dealing with the danger of catastrophic climate change. The duty to save the earth from environmental catastrophe is neglected for the sake of money. As Al Gore said, “Instead of having a well-informed electorate, we have a well-amused audience”.

## Military-Industrial Complexes

The two world wars of the 20th Century involved a complete reordering of the economies of the belligerent countries, and a dangerous modern phenomenon was created - the military-industrial complex.

In his farewell address (January 17, 1961) US President Dwight David Eisenhower warned of the dangers of the war-based economy that World War II had forced his nation to build: "...We have been compelled to create an armaments industry of vast proportions", Eisenhower said, "..Now this conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in American experience. The total influence - economic, political, even spiritual - is felt in every city, every state house, every office in the federal government. ...We must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society... We must stand guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted."

This farsighted speech by Eisenhower deserves to be studied by everyone who is concerned about the future of human civilization and the biosphere. As the retiring president pointed out, the military-industrial complex is a threat both to peace and to democracy. It is not unique to the United States but exists in many countries. The world today spends roughly two trillion (i.e. two million million) US dollars each year on armaments. It is obvious that very many people make their living from war, and therefore it is correct to



speak of war as a social, political and economic institution. The military-industrial complex is one of the main reasons why war persists, although everyone realizes that war is the cause of much of the suffering of humanity.

The giant corporations of military-industrial complexes do not actually want war. All they want is a level of tensions and threats sufficiently high to justify the insanely vast river of money flowing into their pockets. But the threat of war can easily become a reality through technical or human error, through uncontrollable escalation of a small incident, or through false flag actions.

# Attacks on Democracy in the United States

## **The Republican Party Has Become Irresponsible**

In recent years, and especially since Donald Trump's term as president, the Republican Party has become irresponsible. Republican Senators and members of the House of Representatives no longer act to promote whatever is best for their country and the planet. Instead they block whatever the Democratic Party tries to achieve.

The Republican Party is aided by Senators Joe Manchin and Kyrsten Sinema who, although they are nominally Democrats, act as destructively as though they were Republicans. Manchin is paid to do this by giant coal corporations, while Sinema gets her blood money from big pharmaceutical firms.

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Less serious, but still a life-or-death matter is denial of the seriousness of COVID-19 and the need to combat the pandemic through vaccination. Trump caused several hundred thousand unnecessary deaths by denying the seriousness of COVID-19, and his party continues to echo this doctrine.

## **White Supremacists Fear Racial Equality**

The white population of the United States currently constitutes 61.6 percent of all racial groups. This figure is down



from 72.4 percent in 2010. White supremacists fear that if these demographic trends continue, then in a decade or so, white people will become a minority. The Republican Party derives much of its support from this fear. Furthermore, people in the non-white population tend to be poor. If they become a majority, will they not use their voting power to advocate higher taxes for the rich and more social services for the poor? The solution must be to somehow prevent them from voting. For this reason, Republicans have blocked legislation such as HR1 and the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, which promote equal voting rights for all.

## **The Far Right Today**

The Associated Press gives the following definition of the alt-right movement:

“The ‘alt-right’ or ‘alternative right’ is a name currently embraced by some white supremacists and white nationalists to refer to themselves and their ideology, which emphasizes preserving and protecting the white race in the United States in addition to, or over, other traditional conservative positions such as limited government, low taxes and strict law-and-order. The movement has been described as a mix of racism, white nationalism and populism ... criticizes ‘multiculturalism’ and more rights for non-whites, women, Jews, Muslims, gays, immigrants and other minorities. Its members reject the American democratic ideal that all should have equality under the law regardless of creed, gender, ethnic origin or race.”

Another far right organization, the Proud Boys, displays Nazi swastika flags at their meetings.



Figure 58: There is so much wrong with Donald Trump that one hardly knows where to start. He is a bully, braggart, narcissist, racist, misogynist, habitual liar, and tax evader, in addition to being demonstrably ignorant. He has contempt for both domestic and international law, as well as for the US Constitution. In the words of Michael Moore, he is a “part-time clown and full-time sociopath”. However, it is Trump’s climate change denial, withdrawal from the Paris agreement, and sponsorship of fossil fuels that pose the greatest threats to the future of humans society and the biosphere. The general support of the Republican Party for the fossil fuel industry is the reason why Prof. Noam Chomsky has called the party “the most dangerous organization in history”.



Figure 59: A participant at the Unite the Right rally giving a Nazi salute in front of counter-protesters.



Figure 60: Proud Boys founder Gavin McInnes.

## **High Level Complicity in the January 6 Insurrection**

Here is a link to an article that discusses why it was so easy for the domestic terrorists of the January 6 insurrection to get into the capitol building:

<https://popularresistance.org/details-emerge-of-high-level-state-involvement-in-january-6-events/>

According to the article, the plans for the January 6 insurrection were very well known in advance to DC security officials, because they were openly discussed online. Nevertheless, no risk evaluation was issued and no preparations were made to defend the capitol building. Orders from the Pentagon disarmed the Washington DC National Guard. The Pentagon also refused for several hours to act on a request by Maryland Governor Larry Hogan to employ his state's National Guard against the insurrectionists.

## **Donald Trump Is Still a Threat**

Donald Trump continues to maintain a strong hold over the Republican Party, and many people fear that he might make a successful run for president in 2024.

To prevent this, it has been suggested that the 14th Amendment should be invoked. The relevant section of this important amendment states that,

“No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a

member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may, by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.”

Trump might also be disqualified if he is successfully prosecuted for tax evasion in New York State.

## **The Danger of a Civil War**

The number of guns in the United States is remarkably high: 1.3 guns per person! Furthermore, several hundred private militia groups exist, and their number is increasing. They attract radicalized individuals, and they talk openly about armed rebellion. These militias are primarily made up of right-wing young men. These factors contribute to the danger of a new civil war.

# We Are Militarism's Hostages

## “Mutually Assured Destruction”

Do our Defense Departments really defend us? Absolutely not! Their very title is a lie. The military-industrial complex sells itself by claiming to defend civilians. It justifies vast and crippling budgets by this claim; but it is a fraud. For the military-industrial complex, the only goal is money and power. Civilians like us are just hostages. We are expendable. We are pawns in the power game, the money game.

Nations possessing nuclear weapons threaten each other with “Mutually Assured Destruction”, which has the very appropriate acronym MAD. What does this mean? Does it mean that civilians are being protected? Not at all. Instead they are threatened with complete destruction. Civilians here play the role of hostages in the power games of their leaders.

A thermonuclear war today would be not only genocidal but also omnicidal. It would kill people of all ages, babies, children, young people, mothers, fathers and grandparents, without any regard whatever for guilt or innocence. Such a war would be the ultimate ecological catastrophe, destroying not only human civilization but also much of the biosphere.

There is much worry today about climate change, but an ecological catastrophe of equal or greater magnitude could be produced by a nuclear war. One can gain a small idea of what this would be like by thinking of the radioactive contamination that has made an area half the size of Italy near to Chernobyl permanently uninhabitable. The Fukushima



Figure 61: The nuclear arms race casts a dark shadow over the future of human civilization and the biosphere.



Figure 62: During the Cuban Missile Crisis, the world came close to a catastrophic thermonuclear war.

disaster also reminds us of the dangerous long-term effects of radioactivity.

The testing of hydrogen bombs in the Pacific half a century ago continues to cause cancer and birth defects in the Marshall Islands today. This too can give us a small idea of the environmental effects of a nuclear war. But the radioactivity produced by a nuclear war would be enormously greater.

In 1954, the United States tested a hydrogen bomb at Bikini. The bomb was 1,300 times more powerful than the bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Fallout from the bomb contaminated the island of Rongelap, one of the Marshall Islands 120 kilometers from Bikini. The islanders experienced radiation illness, and many died from cancer. Even today, more than half a century later, both people and animals on Rongelap and other nearby islands suffer from birth defects. The most common defects have been “jelly fish babies”, born with no bones and with transparent skin. Their brains and beating hearts can be seen. The babies usually live a day or two before they stop breathing.

The environmental effects of a nuclear war would be catastrophic. A war fought with hydrogen bombs would produce radioactive contamination of the kind that we have already experienced in the areas around Chernobyl and Fukushima and in the Marshall Islands, but on an enormously increased scale. We have to remember that the total explosive power of the nuclear weapons in the world today is 500,000 times as great as the power of the bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. What is threatened by a nuclear war today is the complete breakdown of human civilization.

Besides spreading deadly radioactivity throughout the world, a nuclear war would inflict catastrophic damage on global agriculture. Firestorms in burning cities would pro-



duce many millions of tons of black, thick, radioactive smoke. The smoke would rise to the stratosphere where it would spread around the earth and remain for a decade. Prolonged cold, decreased sunlight and rainfall, and massive increases in harmful ultraviolet light would shorten or eliminate growing seasons, producing a nuclear famine. Even a small nuclear war could endanger the lives of the billion people who today are chronically undernourished. A full-scale war fought with hydrogen bombs would mean that most humans would die from hunger. Many animal and plant species would also be threatened with extinction.

Incidents in which global disaster is avoided by a hairs breadth are constantly occurring. For example, on the night of 26 September, 1983, Lt. Col. Stanislav Petrov, a young software engineer, was on duty at a surveillance center near Moscow. Suddenly the screen in front of him turned bright red. An alarm went off. It's enormous piercing sound filled the room. A second alarm followed, and then a third, fourth and fifth, until the noise was deafening. The computer showed that the Americans had launched a strike against Russia. Petrov's orders were to pass the information up the chain of command to Secretary General Yuri Andropov. Within minutes, a nuclear counterattack would be launched. However, because of certain inconsistent features of the alarm, Petrov disobeyed orders and reported it as a computer error, which indeed it was. Most of us probably owe our lives to his brave and cool-headed decision and his knowledge of software systems. The narrowness of this escape is compounded by the fact that Petrov was on duty only because of the illness of another officer with less knowledge of software, who would have accepted the alarm as real.

Narrow escapes such as this show us clearly that in the long run, the combination of space-age science and stone-

age politics will destroy us. We urgently need new political structures and new ethics to match our advanced technology.

Recently the United States has made provocative moves that seriously risk starting a war with Russia that might develop into a nuclear war. These include sending armaments and military advisers to Ukraine, and NATO exercises on the Russian border.

At the same time, the United States is making aggressive moves in an attempt to “contain China”.

Thus Washingtons power-holders are threatening war with both Russia and China. The effect of these colossally misguided US actions has been to firmly unite China and Russia. In fact the BRICS countries, with their vast resources, are now moving away from using the dollar as a reserve currency for international trade. The probable effect will be the collapse of the already-strained US economy, and as a consequence, the fall of the US Empire.

What can be the reason for these actions, which seem to border on insanity? One reason can be found in the power-drunk thinking of the “Project for a New American Century”, one of whose members was US Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, Paul Wolfowitz.

The Wolfowitz Doctrine states that “Our first objective is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival, either on the territory of the former Soviet Union or elsewhere, that poses a threat on the order of that posed formerly by the Soviet Union. This is a dominant consideration underlying the new regional defense strategy and requires that we endeavor to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power.”

In other words, the Wolfowitz Doctrine is a declaration that the United States intends to control the entire world

through military power. No thought is given to the protection of civilian populations, either in the United States or elsewhere. Civilians are mere hostages in the power game.

The money game is important too. A great driving force behind militarism is the almost unimaginably enormous river of money that buys the votes of politicians and the propaganda of the mainstream media. Numbed by the propaganda, citizens allow the politicians to vote for obscenely bloated military budgets, which further enrich the corporate oligarchs, and the circular flow continues.

The giant, immensely wealthy and politically powerful arms manufacturers of military-industrial complex do not really want war. What they want is the threat of war. As long as tensions are maintained; as long as there is a threat of war, the military-industrial complex gets the money for which it lusts, and the politicians and journalists get their blood money. The safety of civilians plays no role in the money game. We are just hostages.

There is a danger that our world, with all the beauty and value that it contains, will be destroyed by this cynical game for power and money, in which civilians are militarism's hostages. Will we let this happen?