



CHAPTER 46


PROTECT THE WORLD'S CHILDREN: LEAVE A HABITABLE PLANET FOR POSTERITY


 ***“THIS IS OUR FIRST TASK, CARING FOR OUR CHILDREN. IT’S OUR FIRST JOB. IF WE DON’T GET THAT RIGHT, WE DON’T GET ANYTHING RIGHT. THAT’S HOW, AS A SOCIETY, WE WILL BE JUDGED.”¹***

 *“We know we’re always doing right when we’re taking care of them [our children], when we’re teaching them well, when we’re showing acts of kindness. We don’t go wrong when we do that.”¹*

 And what of the future generations of children not yet born that are called posterity?

 Isn’t leaving a habitable planet for them to live on the ultimate act of kindness?

 Climate change is already adversely affecting food and water security and expanding the range of tropical diseases.

 The world’s children are now at increased risk.



HUMANITY CANNOT PROTECT THE WORLD'S CHILDREN IF RUNAWAY CLIMATE CHANGE OCCURS.

- 🌍 **Continuing anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions at present rates ensures that runaway climate change will occur — probably in the 21st century.**
- 🌍 **One estimation is that humans have altered more than 50% of Earth's land surface and that the current rate of land transformation is unsustainable.²**
- 🌍 **The pH of the planet's oceans has been changed from mildly alkaline to mildly acidic, in addition to other changes.**
- 🌍 **The human population continues to grow exponentially, but food production does not.**
- 🌍 **The cost of combating climate change is surging,³ but policymakers still lack a sense of urgency for action.**




“THE ‘LAW’ OF DIMINISHING MARGINAL RETURNS APPLIES TO SUCCESSIVE INVESTMENTS IN NONRENEWABLE NATURAL RESOURCE (NNR) EXPLORATION; I.E., INVESTMENTS IN THE EXPLORATION FOR, THE EXTRACTION OF, AND THE PROVISIONING OF FOSSIL FUELS, METALS, AND NONMETALLIC MINERALS OVER TIME.”⁴







The reckless use of fossil fuels is rapid and causes damaging climate change, which is a threat to civilization.




The reckless use of nonrenewable resources leaves little for the present generation’s children , and the remaining, proven reserves are difficult to obtain and, in many cases, are in politically unstable regions.

 ***“THERE WAS A MAN WHO HAD A GOOSE THAT ALWAYS LAID GOLDEN EGGS, ONE EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR. NOW , HE THOUGHT THERE MUST BE GOLD INSIDE OF HER. SO HE WRUNG HER NECK AND LAID HER OPEN. HE FOUND THAT SHE WAS EXACTLY LIKE ALL OTHER GEESE. HE THOUGHT TO FIND RICHES, AND LOST THE LITTLE HE HAD.”⁵***


-  Humanity should be content to live with the services and the finite renewable resources the finite present Biosphere provides annually and not be greedy.
-  However, humanity is attempting to maintain a high consumption lifestyle for approximately half the world's population while the other half lives in conditions the wealthier half would find unacceptable.
-  Humanity must do more for its children and grandchildren than keep their pictures in a wallet or purse. It should do everything possible to leave a habitable planet for them to live on.


 **“THE SURVIVAL OF THE HUMAN SPECIES IS NOT A PREORDAINED EVOLUTIONARY PROGRAM. ABUNDANT SOURCES OF GENETIC VARIATION EXIST FOR VIRUSES TO LEARN NEW TRICKS, NOT NECESSARILY CONFINED TO WHAT HAPPENS ROUTINELY, OR EVEN FREQUENTLY.”⁶**

 **Many factors, if not addressed rapidly, could lead to a collapse of global civilization.⁷**

 **Major drivers of a global collapse are “*overpopulation, overconsumption by the rich and poor choices of technologies . . .*”⁷**

 **“*Dramatic cultural change provides the main hope of averting calamity.*”⁷**






 **“*But whether we or more optimistic observers are correct, our own ethical values compel us to think the benefits to those future generations are worth struggling for, to increase at least slightly the chances of avoiding a dissolution of today’s global civilization as we know it.*”⁷**







**“MAN IS THE ONLY ANIMAL
FOR WHO HIS OWN EXISTENCE
IS A PROBLEM WHICH HE HAS
TO SOLVE.”** *Erich Fromm*

- 🌍 **Humanity must accept that its lifestyle and practices must be congruent with the universal laws of physics, chemistry, and biology.**
- 🌍 ***“Unlike any creature that lived before, we have become a geophysical force, swiftly changing the atmosphere and the climate as well as the composition of the world’s fauna and flora.”⁸***
- 🌍 **In 2013, humanity is finding out that these changes are far from benign.**
- 🌍 **In fact, if business as usual continues, the probable consequence is the collapse of western civilization.⁹**

***HOMO SAPIENS* EVOLVED IN THE PRESENT BIOSPHERE, THE SIXTH, AS DID ALL OTHER SPECIES WITH WHICH HUMANS SHARE THE PLANET.**

-  **Humans and the 30+ million other species are both part of the present Biosphere and will share its fate if it collapses.**
-  **Humanity is now altering Earth's climate and human hereditary traits. The product of natural selection is a major factor that results in destructive behavior.**
-  **Cooperation in protecting the present Biosphere is virtually absent.**
-  **Restriction of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, which are irreversibly altering Earth's climate, is fiercely opposed by both individuals and powerful fossil fuel corporations.**
-  **Humans have a suicidal priority list – the economy first and the environment last. Humanity's genetic heritage favors a short-range perspective and ignores posterity.**

 **FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS, THE GENUS *HOMO*, INCLUDING *HOMO SAPIENS*, WAS TRIBAL AND SPREAD IN LOW NUMBERS OVER MOST OF THE PLANET. NOW IT IS GLOBALIZED.**

-  This situation raises an interesting question: “*Can individual intelligence have selective (i.e., survival) value for a globalized species?*”¹⁰
-  Another question also arises: “*Can Homo sapiens survive drastic, irreversible climate changes that affect food and water supplies, plus the probable disequilibrium of the biospheric life support system?*”¹⁰
-  Natural selection has not prepared *Homo sapiens* for addressing global problems, but it is at least possible, if not probable, that social evolution might provide this capacity.

A MAJOR OBSTACLE TO DEVELOPING A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE ON CLIMATE CHANGE IS THAT DIFFERENT ECO-REGIONS WILL RESPOND DIFFERENTLY TO INCREASED TEMPERATURE.


- 🌐 For example, *“Large parts of the continent [Australia] will be uninhabitable [wild fire, climate change], not just by humans but by Australia’s spectacular biodiversity as well.”*¹¹
- 🌐 Attitudes on climate change are changing in Australia where climate change impacts are severe and readily observable, but must catastrophes at the level of severity occur everywhere before a global perspective on climate change is achieved?
- 🌐 Brush fires and unusual heat waves are probably the “new normal” for Australia,¹² but the evolutionary changes are, at present, difficult to predict.
- 🌐 *“Physics doesn’t understand that rapid action on climate change threatens the most lucrative business on Earth, the fossil fuel industry. It’s implacable. It takes the carbon dioxide we produce and translates it into heat, which means into melting ice and rising oceans and gathering storms.”*¹³


🚩 TWO VIEWS ARE BLOCKING GLOBALIZATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE: (1) IT (MAJOR CHANGE) WON'T HAPPEN IN MY LIFE TIME. (2) IT'S (MAJOR CHANGE) FAR AWAY (IN TIME OR SPACE) AND HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ME.


- 🌍 **What about the present generation's children , grandchildren, and their children — isn't it humanity's responsibility to leave them a habitable planet?**
- 🌍 **What about the 30+ million other species with which humans share the present Biosphere — shouldn't the present generation try to leave as many species as possible for future generations and not sacrifice these species in the name of economic growth?**
- 🌍 **Spaceship Earth could be regarded as a global version of Noah's Ark, transporting the biota of the present Biosphere into the future.**
- 🌍 **The fable of the man who killed the goose that laid the golden eggs is a metaphor for humanity's relationship with the present Biosphere.⁵**

PERSISTENCE IN CLIMATE CHANGE DENIAL AND THE RESULTING INACTION IN REDUCING ANTHROPOGENIC GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS ARE STEALING THE FUTURE FROM EARTH'S CHILDREN.

 *“Everybody’s got a plan until they get punched in the mouth.”* Mike Tyson

 *“The episode in human history that I named in my 2005 book *The Long Emergency* is off to a good start.”*¹⁴

 *“Whenever I venture out to the campuses and professional conferences people ask me *What’s your time frame for this long emergency? I tell them we’ve entered the zone.*”*¹⁴

 *“The most conspicuous feature of these times is our inability to construct a coherent consensus about what is happening to us and what we’re going to do about it.”*¹⁴

✚ ***“THE DAMAGE THAT CLIMATE CHANGE IS CAUSING AND THAT WILL GET WORSE IF WE FAIL TO ACT GOES BEYOND HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF LIVES, HOMES AND BUSINESSES LOST, ECOSYSTEMS DESTROYED, SPECIES DRIVEN TO EXTINCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE SMASHED AND PEOPLE INCONVENIENCED.”*** DAVID SUZUKI

✚ **THERE ARE PLENTY OF PROBLEMS IN THE WORLD, MANY OF THEM INTERCONNECTED. BUT THERE IS NO PROBLEM WHICH COMPARES WITH THIS CENTRAL, UNIVERSAL PROBLEM OF SAVING THE HUMAN RACE FROM EXTINCTION.**

JOHN FOSTER DULLES


✚ ***“MOST EVOLVING LINEAGES, HUMAN OR OTHERWISE, WHEN THREATENED WITH EXTINCTION, DON'T DO ANYTHING SPECIAL TO AVOID IT.”*** GEORGE C. WILLIAMS

✚ ***“EXTINCTION IS THE RULE. SURVIVAL IS THE EXCEPTION.”***

CARL SAGAN

 **“WE ARE CONFRONTED WITH THE FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW . . .”**

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

 **“WE HAVE A DREAM — THAT OUR PRESIDENT WILL UNDERSTAND THE INTERGENERATIONAL INJUSTICE OF HUMAN-MADE CLIMATE CHANGE — THAT HE WILL RECOGNIZE OUR DUTY TO BE CARETAKERS OF CREATION, OF THE LAND, OF THE LIFE ON OUR PLANET — AND THAT HE WILL GIVE THESE MATTERS THE PRIORITY OUR YOUNG PEOPLE DESERVE.”** *James Hansen*¹⁵

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