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Chapter 1

The situation

All truth passes through three states: First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. And third, it is accepted as self-evident. Andrew Schopenhauer, German philosopher (1788 - 1860)

The human race is the most intelligent species on planet Earth, and yet here we are, sleepwalking towards omnicide. How can that be? And what can we do about it at this late date?

“Omnicide” is a fairly new word that is not in most dictionaries yet, but if you Google it, you will find 44,000+ references. It means the killing of everything, the extinction of our species—humanity, or *Homo sapiens*—and the extermination of all or most other life forms; basically the assassination of Earth.¹ Omnicide would be the ultimate crime against humanity, against life, and against whatever deity or deities may exist. If you are not aware of this clear and present danger, then you are probably not paying enough attention to the news, and by default, you may, inadvertently, have become part of the problem, one of the “bad guys,” even if you are a fine person in every other respect. This lemming-march threatens to be the very last act in human history, and if you are not even aware of it, then you simply have not yet connected the dots, and as a result, you may be out of touch with reality to such an extent that your personal “disconnect” may even qualify as a mental disorder, like the affliction that befuddled Emperor Nero, who allegedly “fiddled while Rome burned.”²

It’s okay to be passionate about the survival of planet Earth. Dr. Helen Caldicott, Australian physician and peace activist, at an Operation Dismantle conference in 1984

I have heard it said that “the harsher the truth, the better the friend that tells you about it.” Those who don’t subscribe to this maxim may find me unduly harsh, and that is most unfortunate. I *do* subscribe to that maxim, and all I am trying to do here is hammer home the literally suicidal situation that we have gotten ourselves into as a species, and be as good a friend as I know how to be to you and to all of my fellow human beings.

¹ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_extinction for more on this unhappy topic.

² I know this tale is historically doubtful, if only because the fiddle or violin was not invented in or before Nero’s time. However, because this tale is well known, it serves charmingly to make a most un-charming point.

It would indeed be the ultimate tragedy if the history of the human race proved to be nothing more noble than the story of an ape playing with a box of matches on a petrol dump. David Ormsby-Gore, 5th Baron Harlech, Minister of State, Great Britain, in the *Christian Science Monitor*, 1960

Regarding omnicide, most people are in denial about it, so I really must be blunt, as Einstein was just after WWII, when he opined: “The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking, and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophe.” He used the word “drift,” as one might drift down a river, without any thought to one’s destination and without any apparent sense of having control over one’s destiny. That bleak assessment of our situation is 60 years old, and we still haven’t even banned nuclear weapons, let alone war. We inhabit a planet in deep environmental trouble, *and we are the trouble*, so let’s take a close-up look at the “disconnect” I mentioned above, and at our real-world situation.

Mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind.
U.S. President John F. Kennedy, speech to the UN, September 25, 1961

An AP Poll (March 31, 2005) reported that most Americans think that their government should cut its nuclear arsenal by about half. However, the poll also revealed that average Americans think (or “guesstimate”) that the USA currently has 200 nuclear weapons in its arsenal. The U.S. stockpile is between 6,000 and 10,000 nuclear weapons.³ *That* is what I meant by “out of touch with reality,” and one of the agenda items I am attempting to shove onto centre stage is the fact that there are still more than enough nuclear weapons in the world to kill us all many times over. That is called “overkill,” by the way, and I remember Dr. Helen Caldicott,⁴ 20+ years ago, emphasizing that “overkill is not a medical term—it is a political term, and an insane one.” In the real world, she noted, we can die only once, not many times over.

More and more nations (and non-state players, such as terrorist groups) are trying to acquire these “overkill” nuclear weapons in a world that is already wired to self-destruct. Also, parties who can’t afford to buy such things on the black market and can’t make them are looking to acquire what is sometimes referred to as “the poor man’s nuke,” biological or chemical weapons. These are also “weapons of mass destruction,” or WMD—not as flashy as a nuclear explosion, but just as lethal. All of this is ... well, in a word, “alarming.” And yet most people simply are not “alarmed.”

³ Robert S. Norris and Hans M. Kristensen. “U.S. nuclear forces, 2006,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (January/February 2005): 68-71. It is hard to be exact on this number, since the USA does not like to say exactly what it has (nor do other nations). The *world* stockpile at the time of writing (2007) is *about* 27,000.

⁴ Australian physician and the star of the 1980s anti-nuclear-weapons film *If You Love This Planet*, which was labelled as “propaganda” by then-U.S. president Ronald Reagan. (The movie subsequently won an Academy Award.)

One is born into a herd of buffaloes and must be glad if one is not trampled underfoot before one's time. Albert Einstein, *Einstein, a portrait*, Thomas F. Burke (editor), p. 100 (Einstein is pointing out the danger inherent in the irrational or instinctive side of human nature.)

For decades, anti-nuclear activists and the scientists who tried to warn us about climate change have been labelled “alarmists,” like that famous scaredy-cat Chicken Little,⁵ who ran around screaming “The sky is falling, the sky is falling.” Some well-known (and otherwise intelligent) people have gone to extremes to show how anti-war or climate change activists were a few kernels short of a cob. Yet the sad tactics of twisting the truth and just plain making things up (aka “lying”) are often the hallmark of those who seek to justify the nuclear weapons arsenals, or to discredit public concern about climate change. Reverend Jerry Falwell said that global warming was “phoney baloney” in a 2007 televised sermon, adding that the debate was “alarmist,” “hysterical” and “a tool of Satan” ... and that global warming theory was “the greatest deception in the history of science.” I remember U.S. Lieutenant-General Daniel O. Graham (back in the 1970s, he headed the American Defense Intelligence Agency) telling reporters that “If a one-megaton [nuclear] weapon would explode over this building ... and you had the good sense to start walking and got behind a lilac bush, that weapon would not hurt you.”⁶ In 2002, before he became the prime minister of Canada, Stephen Harper said that global warming was “a money-sucking socialist scheme.”⁷ So, let's deal with this question of “alarmism” head on.

⁵ Fable of unknown origin, popularized by Walt Disney in a short film in 1943. The fable is known as *Chicken Little* or *The Sky is Falling*. The character is now used to indicate an hysterical or mistaken belief that disaster is imminent.

⁶ In the 1980's, I published Graham's infamous quote in *The Dismantler*, along with the following list of the effects of a one-megaton bomb. “The temperature in the middle of the blast would be in the millions of degrees. The pressure would be ten million times normal. Everything in a radius of 1 to 1.5 miles would be vaporized or otherwise demolished. Winds would move out from the blast at about 500 miles per hour. Up to 1.5 miles from the centre, 98% of the people would be killed outright. Up to 3 miles out, 50% would be killed and 40% would be injured. At 5 to 10 miles out, 10% would be killed outright and there would still be serious injuries. Within a 5-mile radius, thermal radiation would ignite anything flammable and cook any exposed skin. There would be third degree burns 8 miles out. People who looked at the fireball of a one-megaton bomb from 10 miles away would be instantly blinded. And this is not even to mention the effects of nuclear radiation and fallout.”

⁷ Canadian Press, January 30, 2007. As prime minister, Conservative Stephen Harper sort-of saw the light and tried to turn a little “green,” with mixed results.

In an all-out nuclear war, more destructive power than in all of World War II would be unleashed every second during the long afternoon it would take for all the missiles and bombs to fall. A World War II every second--more people killed in the first few hours than all the wars of history put together. The survivors, if any, would live in despair amid the poisoned ruins of a civilization that had committed suicide. Jimmy Carter, "Farewell Address to the American People," January 14, 1981

Everybody's going to make it (survive a nuclear WWII) if there are enough shovels to go around. Dig a hole, cover it with a couple of doors and then throw three feet of dirt on top. It's the dirt that does it. T.K. Jones, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Strategic and Theater Nuclear Forces, *LA Times*, January 16, 1982

I decline to accept the end of man. William Faulkner, speech upon receiving the Nobel Prize, December 10, 1950

Either there is cause for alarm, or there is not, and if not, then I will have to admit that I wasted a lot of my life designing a grand solution for a problem that doesn't even exist. However, I remember that during the Cold War, we⁸ tried to nail down what we'd called the "GOF," or "global overkill factor." The lowest estimate that we found (uttered by U.S. Congressman Leon Panetta) was ten. This was in the 1980s. There are fewer nukes today, but their destructive capacity has not changed significantly, so it would not be "alarmist" to go with that estimate today, and say that there are, in the early 21st century, enough nuclear weapons to assassinate humanity 10 times over. (Bear in mind that it doesn't matter greatly what the GOF is, because after we murder ourselves once, additional detonations will do nothing but "make the rubble bounce," as Churchill said.)

Even without referring to our incredible weapons of war, the use of which can destroy the planet Earth,⁹ a 2006 UN report, involving 1,360 scientists from 95 countries, states that two thirds of the resources of the planet have "already been consumed," and food, clean water and non-renewable energy supplies are vanishing at an "alarming" rate.¹⁰ It also says that one quarter of all mammalian species may soon become extinct (plus similar percentages of birds and amphibians). By way of explanation, Jay Keller (of Population Connection) said that planet Earth "cannot sustain the six billion human beings who exist now, let alone the 7, 8, or 9 billion that we are headed towards." And

⁸ I headed Operation Dismantle, a Canadian nuclear disarmament organization, at the time.

⁹ Would it still be called "war" if we destroyed the whole planet? Doesn't a war have to come to an end, with some people on all sides surviving?

¹⁰ The report was done by the United Nations Environment Program (et al). It is entitled *The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment*. It concludes that many of the planet's essential (to our survival) systems are endangered, mostly due to human activity. And it warns that, if left unchecked, the consequences could be "dire" (a polite way of saying we're killing ourselves, and everything else).

Robert Watson, former Chief Scientist at the World Bank, added: “We are undermining the resources we are critically dependent on,” which in my view is just another way of saying that we are “committing omnicide.”

If the last IPCC [the UN’s Nobel Prize winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] report was a wake up call, this one is a screaming siren.... The bad news is that the more we know, the more precarious the future looks. There’s a clear message to governments here, and the window for action is narrowing fast. Stephanie Tunmore, Greenpeace, Feb. 2007, www.blogsw.solidwastemag.com

In its “Living Planet Report” of October, 2006, the World Wildlife Fund asserts that the world’s natural ecosystems are being degraded at such a rate that by 2050 we’ll need *two* Earths to meet human needs, and says that “the natural health of planet Earth has declined by 30% just since 1970.”¹¹ WWF calls this a “dangerous trend,” since essential resources will be increasingly fought over by desperate nations, and hoarded by the more fortunate. In his response to the report, Princeton atmospheric scientist Michael Oppenheimer said that “civilization just won’t be able to cope ... even within this century.” He went on to say that we’re using *five times* too much fossil fuel, and the excess has thrown the Earth dangerously out of balance through global warming, and “we have to cut greenhouse gases by 80%, *starting now*, to bring the Earth’s system back into balance.” However, human production of these greenhouse gases is going *up*, not down. “The consequences [of all this] are both predictable and dire,” said James Leape, director general of WWF in the USA, meaning we can’t claim we didn’t know when our grandchildren ask us why we have destroyed *their* planet beyond any hope of reclamation.

We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors, we borrow it from our Children. Ancient American Aboriginal proverb¹²

On October 30, 2006, Peter Mansbridge, the distinguished anchor of CBC TV’s flagship newscast (*The National*), opened with a story under the onscreen title, “Doomsday Report.” “If there’s a global warming alarm out there,” he began excitedly, “it is ringing tonight.” He went on to describe the “sweeping” British study that put the *economic* impact of climate change on par with the Second World War or the Great Depression. “That’s pretty alarming,” he said. (And there’s that “A”-word again ... “alarm” ... twice.)

¹¹ All quotes in this paragraph are from a report on ABC News, October 24, 2006.

¹² The full quote is this (choices of lower- or upper-case letters are not mine): “Treat the earth well: it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children. We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors, we borrow it from our Children.” It is variously attributed as above, or to: 1) Haida proverb; 2) Ancient Indian proverb; 3) Native American proverb.

Alarm bells are ringing. The world must wake up to the threat posed by climate change. Catherine Pearce, Friends of the Earth, Feb. 2, 2007

Sir Nicholas Stern,¹³ described as “one of the world’s most credentialed economists,” is then shown onscreen saying: “When people don’t pay for the consequences of their actions, we have market failure. This is the greatest market failure the world has seen.” He went on to say that if we deal with it now, it would cost perhaps 1% of the global economy. And if we procrastinate, it will cost up to 20%—a staggering seven *trillion* dollars. And that is not to mention the human suffering if “100 million people [are] forced from their homes by rising sea levels,” or if we have some “tens of millions of climate refugees.” And what is the response of governments and industries and all of us individuals? As mentioned above, the production of greenhouse gases is increasing, not decreasing.

The question is not whether climate change is happening or not, but whether, in the face of this emergency, we ourselves can change fast enough. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Nairobi, Kenya, 2006

Previous generations sought to conquer or “tame” nature in the pursuit of wealth and a better life. As a result of their success, we are now faced with an invoice for vast sums to restore nature to its previous position as an abundant “sustainer” of all life. These expenses represent the hidden cost involved in unsustainable production practices that temporarily benefited a few at the enormous expense of the many.

A few diehard sceptics continue to deny global warming is taking place and try to sow doubt. They should be seen for what they are: out of step, out of arguments and out of time. The scientific consensus is becoming not only more complete, but also more alarming. Many scientists long known for their caution are now saying that global warming trends are perilously close to a point of no return. Kofi Annan, November 15, 2006

In a speech to the Canadian Nuclear Association on the Kyoto accord, Dr. James Lovelock (who is “pro nuclear power,” and “no tree-hugger,” by his own description) said that we “have little time left to act” on global warming¹⁴ (*Globe and Mail*, March, 2005). He explained further: “Those who construct [computer] models of such changes ... predict that somewhere between 400 and 600 parts per million of carbon dioxide, Earth passes a threshold beyond which global warming becomes irreversible [meaning the Earth may be so different as to be inhospitable to human life]. We are now at 380 parts

¹³ Sir Nicholas Stern was then Head of the Government Economics Service and Adviser to the British Government on the economics of climate change.

¹⁴ Now, most scientists prefer or insist upon the term “climate change.”

per million, and we could reach 400 ppm within seven years.” This is one more nice, polite way of saying that we humans are committing omnicide, yet some people doggedly continue to deny the science of climate change, either because their industry would be more profitable if global warming could be dismissed as a scientific hoax, or because a malevolent or ignorant authority figure said to do so (most people simply do not have the specialized knowledge needed to assess for themselves the accuracy or value of scientific findings).

The oceans that cover about 70 percent of the Earth’s surface are not doing well either. A report¹⁵ in the prestigious journal *Science* (November 2, 2006) says that if present trends continue, all the oceans will be *essentially emptied of seafood by 2048*. Thirty percent of all fish stocks are already “in collapse” (depleted by 90% or so) because of overfishing, and remaining stocks are certain to follow unless something dramatic is done, soon. The entire oceanic ecosystem is in crisis, and on the high seas there is essentially no effective governance.¹⁶ It seems there is no part of this planet that we humans cannot get to, and ruin ... or at least harm severely.

On January 17, 2007, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists¹⁷ announced that the hands of its world famous “doomsday clock” would be pushed forward by two minutes, to the position of five minutes to midnight, meaning that at this time, the human race is in great danger of causing its own extinction—in *significantly greater danger than before*. And for the first time, they cited not only the nuclear danger (the “second nuclear age” is what they called it, as rogue states and non-state players—like al-Qaeda—seek to build, buy or steal nukes), but also the fact that we are risking omnicide through climate change. The Bulletin spokesperson did not use the word “omnicide,” but he could have, and maybe should have. Language should be as precise as possible, especially for scientists, and “omnicide” is the only word that captures the scope and essence of the horrific crime¹⁸ that we are now committing. (See Preface for more on this press conference.)

If we don’t end war, war will end us. H.G. Wells, English writer,
Things to Come, 1936

I find it *embarrassing* to be a human being. Yes, I know that most of the people that we know *personally* are nice people, or at least okay, but as a group, humans are wrecking everything, soiling the nest, and not just for ourselves, but potentially for all life forms. If that isn’t the absolute most embarrassing reputation to be stuck with, I don’t know what is. It is far worse than any garden-variety criminal, like a car thief or a mugger. We belong to a family, and if planet Earth is regarded as the patient, then our

¹⁵ This research was led by Dr. Boris Worm, Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia, Canada.

¹⁶ There is the *Law of the Sea Treaty* and a few other international efforts, but these have not done much, or enough, to prevent or even slow the ecological disaster that is described by Dr. Worm et al.

¹⁷ Founded back in 1945 as a newsletter for nuclear physicists concerned by the possibility of nuclear war, it is now an “organization” focused more generally on manmade threats to the survival of human civilization.

¹⁸ Reporting from the Valencia, Spain meeting of the IPCC (November 16, 2007), BBC’s environmental correspondent David Shukman said the “shocking” scientific findings had become “suddenly alarming,” and that: “People here say it’s screamingly obvious that action needs to be taken, some officials saying it would be *even criminally irresponsible* not to [take action].” (Emphasis added.)

family must be seen as a disease ... a global pandemic. Look anywhere, and there we are, doing harm.

On March 21, 2007, former American vice-president Al Gore¹⁹ testified to committees of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate. “Nature is on the run,” he said. “Future generations will suffer ... and they will ask, ‘What in God’s name were they doing? Didn’t they see the evidence? Didn’t they hear the warnings?’” Yet even with his enormous TV presence and the credibility of his having won an Academy Award for the film on climate change that he starred in (*An Inconvenient Truth*) plus having been nominated for the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize (which he later won, with the IPCC), he still felt the need to half-apologize for his dire warning. “The world faces a true planetary emergency,” he said, but with his next breath he added: “I know that sounds shrill, and I know it’s a challenge to the moral imagination to see and feel and understand that the entire relationship between humanity and the planet has been altered.”

Shrill? I think not. We *do* face a planetary emergency, just like he said.²⁰

It will certainly not be easy to awaken in people a new sense of responsibility for the world, an ability to conduct themselves as if they were to live on this earth forever, and ... be held answerable for its condition one day. Vaclav Havel, writer, 1st president of Czech Republic, from “The World in our Hands,” *Sunrise* magazine, October/November 1995

Stephen Hawking, the celebrated British cosmologist, is far too well known as a towering genius to be called “shrill,” yet he thinks the chances that we will in fact destroy ourselves and the planet are so terrifyingly high that ... well, in his own words:

It is important for the human race to spread out into space for the survival of the species. Life on Earth is at the ever-increasing risk of being wiped out by a disaster such as sudden global warming, nuclear war, a genetically engineered virus or other dangers we have not yet thought of. [www.openthefuture.com, June 19, 2006, Jamais Cascio’s blog, “Stephen Hawking, Global Warming, and Moving Out”]

Sir Richard Branson, billionaire and founder of Virgin Airlines, says we face “an emergency far greater than WWI and WWII.” (*Out of Gas: We Were Warned*, CNN, June 2, 2007) He also states flatly that “the world is hurtling out of control,” and that “we lack the political leadership to stop it from hurtling out of control.” But Branson is investing many millions of dollars in potential solutions, like cellulose ethanol fuel for cars, so surely we can’t dismiss him as a disingenuous alarmist or stick him with the character flaw of being “shrill.”

Steve Connor, the science editor of the *Independent* (UK), wrote a lead article (June 19, 2007) under the headline: “The Earth today stands in imminent peril.” He was responding to a 29-page paper called “Climate change and trace gases,” by Dr. James

¹⁹ Author of the 2007 book, *The Assault on Reason*, about George Bush’s absurd approach to climate change ... and about the demise of public discourse and the “meritocracy of ideas” ... and about democracy.

²⁰ On April 28, 2007, Al Gore called the Canadian government’s climate change policy a “complete and total fraud, designed to mislead the Canadian people.” That, too, *sounds* shrill, but is it accurate? If so, then it’s not really shrill, is it?

Hansen et al, published by the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*.²¹ Hansen wrote: “We have about ten years to put into effect the draconian measures needed to curb CO₂ emissions quickly enough to avert a dangerous rise in global temperature.” As for evidence to suggest that we are aware of the gravity of our situation and doing what is required of us to avert disaster, *there is none*. Connor sums up our dilemma and deals with the (anticipated) accusation that he is being “shrill” as follows:

... nothing short of a planetary rescue will save it [the world] from the environmental cataclysm of dangerous climate change. Those are not the words of eco-warriors, but the considered opinion of a group of eminent scientists writing in a peer-reviewed scientific journal.... [These scientists say that] *civilisation itself is threatened by global warming*. (Emphasis added.)

These scientists say that: “If we have not already passed the dangerous level, the energy infrastructure now in place ensures that we will pass it within several decades.... We conclude that a feasible strategy for planetary rescue almost surely requires a means of extracting [greenhouse gases] from the air.” (I would add that a feasible strategy for planetary rescue also needs a political dimension, and as you may already realize, that is exactly where democratic world government comes in.)

These scientists go even further, and say that: “Humanity cannot afford to burn the Earth’s remaining underground reserves of fossil fuel.” This is not even *imaginable* to most people, and it must truly terrify those who run or own shares in big oil companies.²²

The problem, as described by Stephen Lewis,²³ is that while the issue has finally caught on, “Very few governments [are] taking it seriously.”²⁴ He then elaborated: “Climate change almost moves beyond the scale of human understanding.... We’re shadowing the possibility of an apocalypse in the latter half of this century, and that has not been fully grasped—certainly not by the policy makers.... After the year 2050, this world is in terrible trouble unless we come to our senses now.... We are almost beyond the point of human intervention.... [It seems that] we don’t give a damn about future generations.... [Humanity] is on the brink of a catastrophe unlike any other ... and ... there has to be an emergency response.”

Is Stephen Lewis a “shrill alarmist”? He certainly is not.

²¹ The researchers were led by James Hansen, the director of NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies, and the first scientist to warn the U.S. Congress of global warming. The others were Makiko Sato, Pushker Kharecha, Gary Russell, David Lea and Mark Siddall. This figure (of “10 years”) and this paper may well have inspired the 4-hour CNN program, *Planet in Peril* (aired Oct. 23/24, 2007), which in turn inspired our VP Ted Stalets to create www.PlanetInPeril.org.

²² I trust you realize I am being ironic. At this time, oil companies aren’t the least bit worried about this, because they know ... or at least they *think* they know ... that human beings will *never* stop burning oil and gas, not even if it costs them ... well, everything, actually ... their world, their future ... their own children’s lives and futures. Either we leave all the fossil fuels in the ground or we commit omnicide. Make a decision. Or ... am I just being ironic again?

²³ Canada’s former UN Special Envoy for HIV and AIDS in Africa; he is now Professor in Global Health, Faculty of Social Sciences at McMaster University. He was responding to questions from Jay Ingram, host of *Daily Planet*, on the Discovery Channel, in 2007.

²⁴ The single exception, in his judgement, is the government of the UK.

We appeal, as human beings to human beings: Remember your humanity and forget the rest. If you can do so, the way lies open to a new Paradise; if you cannot, there lies before you the risk of universal death. Albert Einstein (in his last signed public statement)

Just days before this book was submitted to the publisher, the IPCC issued (from Valencia, Spain) its fourth report in this calendar year. It was November 16, 2007, and MSNBC ran a piece²⁵ under the banner headline, “U.N. issues landmark report on global warming.” A subordinate headline reads: “Panel offers dire warnings, establishes scientific baseline for political talks.” The IPCC delegates declared the debate about the science of climate change to be over, and warned that as a result of human activity, the Earth is hurtling toward a warmer age at a quickening pace. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said climate change imperils “the most precious treasures of our planet,” and that the potential impact of global warming is “so severe and so sweeping that only urgent, global action will do.” The MSNBC piece, quoting the IPCC report, said that unless action is taken very soon, human activity could lead to “abrupt and irreversible changes ... *that would make the planet unrecognizable.*” (Emphasis added.)

Ban Ki-moon called climate change “the defining challenge of our age,” and he is right. I am quite astonished to see the right words finally being spoken, but as Stephen Lewis said above, the policy-makers in governments still aren’t taking the actions that are clearly required to save our lives, our children’s lives and our world. Next (in December, 2007) comes an IPCC gathering in Indonesia, and that is where policy makers will either cope or not cope. We must surely hope that they come to their senses and build on the Kyoto Protocol, but my experience tells me that it won’t likely happen, and that we will never get this “crisis” under control unless we also build a democratic world government.

Our technical civilization has just reached its greatest level of savagery. We will have to choose, in the more or less near future, between collective suicide and the intelligent use of our scientific conquests.... Before the terrifying prospects now available to humanity, we see even more clearly that peace is the only goal worth struggling for. This is no longer a prayer but a demand to be made by all peoples to their governments, a demand to choose definitively between hell and reason. Albert Camus, French resistance newspaper *Combat*, August 8, 1945

The newspapers are now full of reports on climate change, and on television, we find programs like *Planet in Peril* and *Can We Save Planet Earth?* TV networks don’t dare to use the word “omnicide” yet, lest *they* be called shrill, I suppose, but they have at least correctly identified the issue as the looming end of civilization or our species, brought on by our own activities. So the question arises: What can you and I *really* do, beyond using

²⁵ <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21844627/>

a bit less gas by switching to car-sharing²⁶ or using our votes to elect the “greenest” candidates in an election? Should we tune the issue out and just have a good time, as many people seem to be doing? Should we just pay our taxes and leave it to government officials or scientists to find a solution, as we do for so many other problems? Here is my answer, in story form.

You pull off the highway for gas. A mechanic investigates a disturbing sound coming from your car. He tells you part of the steering mechanism is malfunctioning, and if you don’t get it fixed, you may crash and die. He demands your car keys, explaining that he may be legally or morally liable if he lets you drive away. In an analogous situation, a bartender doesn’t allow a drunken customer to drive away from his bar.

These are examples of responsible interventions. Whether their actions are grounded in morality or law, these “interveners” acted to safeguard the welfare of other drivers, passengers or pedestrians who could also suffer if the drunk and the driver of the unsafe car had been allowed to just continue on their merry way.

Similarly, if humanity is now committing omnicide, it behoves everyone with a brain, a heart or a soul to scream: “Stop, you fools—you’ll kill us all!” In other words, what is needed today is not one more scholarly study, but some solid traction on the ground in the form of a bona fide *strategy* that gets us off the current trajectory towards oblivion, and onto a much more reasonable path, one that leads to a sustainable future.

If men can develop weapons that are so terrifying as to make the thought of global war include almost a sentence for suicide, you would think that man’s intelligence and his comprehension ... would include also his ability to find a peaceful solution. U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Press Conference, Washington, DC, November 14, 1956

I want to save the world, but I don’t know how. Céline Dion,²⁷ singer, in a CBC interview with Evan Solomon, Sunday, November 19, 2006

I call for such an intervention, *by you*, into the activities of the human species.²⁸ We must identify the individuals and institutions that are behind these unacceptable risks or unsustainable activities, and somehow limit their power to control the direction that our civilization is traveling in. The only conceivable way to do that is to construct a new centre of political gravity, a new trustee of people-power that is truly global in scope but,

²⁶ Cars are parked strategically around a city and are then used by several people on an hourly rate (\$3 to \$10/hour). The car users book time via the Internet, and it saves them money and pollutes less since you only use a car when you must. And when you don’t use the car, you pay nothing. Look into it.

²⁷ These words were in response to a question about what she planned to do after her incredibly successful five-year run in Las Vegas. Dion went on to say that if the experts were in charge of things, whatever they were doing wasn’t working very well, and maybe it was time to ask mothers what we should do to save the world. (She and her husband have a young son that they adore.)

²⁸ On your own behalf, on behalf of your progeny, on behalf of all humanity, but also on behalf of the countless species that cannot communicate using a human language, and hence have no voice in this conversation. (If animals could vote in the global referendum, they would vote 100% “yes” to the proposition that humans govern themselves globally and stop threatening life on Earth.)

unlike the UN, is directly elected, and democratic—an institution that is accountable to the people of planet Earth, and not to national governments.

What's happening [referring to the IPCC report] **is that the scientists, who are the most cautious people on the planet, have now said that we have less than ten years [!] to slow global warming down or else ... we have a crisis, we've been warned about this for two decades now, and no one is paying attention.** Laurie David in an HBO interview (April 22, 2006). She produced *An Inconvenient Truth*, the Oscar-winning documentary on global warming that starred Al Gore.

The earth is not dying, it is being killed. And the people who are killing it have names and addresses. Utah Phillips, singer, storyteller, archivist, historian, activist, philosopher, radio show host

As you should be able to conclude from these first pages, our situation has been called dire, and it *is* dire, but it appears that most people have no sense of the magnitude or the imminence of the threat, and so they live in a collective state of denial. You may even *be* one of these “in denial” people. Although the likelihood of our fixing all that we have made wrong with the world may not be great, you have two obvious options. You can say that we have ruined the planet and just accept that there is nothing you can do, or you can muster the strength and courage—the guts, if you will—to repair things. And that brings us to the question of what we *should* do, *exactly*, not only to repair the damage done, but also to prevent *future* human actions from *ever again* endangering life on Earth.

While we must be prepared to meet the trial if war comes, we should gear foreign and domestic policies toward the ultimate goal, the abolition of war from the face of the earth. You cannot control war; you can only abolish it. In #6 of Rotary's “Seven Paths to Peace”

I am a patriot of humanity. I am a citizen of the world. Charlie Chaplin [French original: Je suis un patriote de l'humanité. Je suis un citoyen du monde.]

It is my opinion that the safety of the world, its protection against the unimaginable devastation of an atomic war, depends upon the institution of a democratic world-wide government — a government of the people themselves.... The experience of generation after generation has shown that pacts and treaties between nations do not avert war, but lead to war. Only a democratic union of the people provides safety and peace. Linus Pauling, Nobel Laureate

Please answer this key question. If you could do something that has a real chance of saving the planet from human abuse—now and forever—something that is legal and easy and would take up only a few hours of your time in the next few weeks, would you do it? If you just said or thought “yes,” you may want to jump ahead to Chapter 13 and get cracking on your assignment *while* you read the rest of the book. Or you can just read on and deal with this specific, personal challenge when you reach Chapter 13 the old-fashioned way.

There’s been a quantum leap technologically in our age, but unless there’s another quantum leap in human relations, unless we learn to live in a new way towards one another, there will be a catastrophe.

Albert Einstein

Nations that prepare for war usually get what they prepare for.

Albert Einstein

Today I can declare my hope and declare it from the bottom of my heart that we will eventually see the time when that number of nuclear weapons is down to zero and the world is a much better place.

General Colin Powell, U.S. Army, then chair of U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, June 10, 1993, at Harvard University

We must inoculate our children against militarism, by educating them in the spirit of pacifism ... Our schoolbooks glorify war and conceal its horrors. They indoctrinate children with hatred. I would teach peace rather than war, love rather than hate. Albert Einstein

Chapter 5

Transparency at the DWG

To reduce corruption effectively, some features that lead to greater transparency and accountability need to be consciously built into the design. Subhash Bhatnagar, when working with the World Bank

All types and levels of governments have at one time or another proven to be corruptible, and the *last* thing we need is a corrupt world government. Here's an interesting question: Would we be better off with a corrupt world government or with no world government at all? In my view, we are likely doomed with either of those two options. The third option, the only one that holds any promise for us, is a corruption-free world government.

To fight corruption of an international nature, we need an international jurisdiction. Baltazar Garzon Real, Investigating Judge, Spain, 10th International Anti-Corruption Conference in Czech Republic

It is possible that the global referendum held to authorize the creation of the democratic world government may not get enough “yes” votes to pass unless voters are assured that the new body will be *completely transparent* and therefore free of corruption from day one, *verifiably* so, and that it will remain that way for all time. That's a mighty tall order. Can we achieve and guarantee such a high standard in the new global political structure? And in perpetuity? Can we make ourselves that promise? And could we keep such a promise to ourselves?

Well, we certainly know how to make a government function with total transparency. It isn't even particularly hard, given a modicum of ingenuity and today's wonderful technologies.²⁹

You may have heard the political truism that the cover-up is often worse than the original crime. I mention this because each act of corruption in government requires many hidden words, a network of silence and illicit *quid pro quos* among all the conspirators. “Transparency” is the key word in corruption-proofing. It is often used and usually applauded at the UN and elsewhere, but rarely is it taken too seriously. It is advantageous to be able to express opinions confidentially and privately at times, but at what cost? Most diplomats and politicians are in favour of transparency *for other people*, but not so much for themselves. If we are to have a corruption-free DWG, transparency must be hoisted from its current status (a bit of a joke) to the top of our priority list. And any person who cannot stand that kind of heat should “stay out of the kitchen,” as the saying has it.

²⁹ The *principle* of total transparency certainly has to be enshrined in the world constitution, but the particulars need not be.

There is no end in sight to the misuse of power by those in public office.... There is a worldwide corruption crisis. Peter Eigen, (then-) Chair of Transparency International announcing the Corruption Perceptions Index 2001

No company would allow employees to hide vital information from the boss, and in a democratic nation, province or city, “we, the people” are supposed to *be* the boss. And if a DWG is established, I can guarantee that *millions* of “world citizens” will be *passionately* interested in everything that *their* public servants and *their* political representatives are saying or doing, in meetings, on their computers and elsewhere. It is, after all, *their* money, so why not keep tabs? Very *very* close tabs, shall we say.

Secrecy is a form of corruption ... lack of transparency is a threat to democracy as lethal as stealing public funds. Oscar Arias, president of Costa Rica and winner of the 1987 Nobel Peace Prize

Corruption is an ever-present aspect of the exercise of governmental power and a persistent and often chronic handicap of political life around the world. Richard D. White, Jr. in *Where Corruption Lives*

Like it or not, elected DWG representatives (or global politicians) and senior DWG civil servants should lead recorded lives, meaning they would be “wired” during working hours, and prohibited from discussing DWG business when off-duty (and not wired). In other words, while on duty, they would have to “wear” a voice-activated tape recorder—or, more precisely, the digital equivalent of same.³⁰

All these “while-on-duty” recordings (probably thousands of hours of “tape” every day) would then be copied and permanently archived at two separate physical locations. They would be made digitally available to the public from an independent security service charged with transcribing and posting the spoken words on the Internet, as a transcript or in audio form. Transcripts of all recordings should be translated into all *major* languages on an on-demand basis.³¹ Computer programs are available that can “machine-translate” written texts into many other languages (these programs are not perfect, but will improve with time). And there are even digital tools on the market (mostly for tourists) that instantaneously translate a person’s spoken words to a selected second language, and then “speak” the translation, using a voice synthesizer. All major DWG proceedings could be televised live on a dedicated DWG channel, and archived videos could be made available to anyone over the Internet.

³⁰ In the February 18, 2007 edition of *Scientific American* is an article entitled “A Digital Life,” by Gordon Bell and Jim Gemmell, about new technologies that *can archive everything you hear, speak and see for an entire lifetime*. See also “Total recall,” by Clive Thompson, in the *Ottawa Citizen*, March 1, 2007, about Gordon Bell, who has totally archived the last seven years of his life. Bell works for Microsoft, and his software is called “MyLifeBits.”

³¹ The UN has six “official” languages (this applies to all UN organs *except* the International Court of Justice)—English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Chinese. I expect the DWG would want to aim for translation into *all* languages.

Whoever is careless with the truth in small matters cannot be trusted with important affairs. Albert Einstein

Fighting terrorism was dangerous, but fighting corruption was much more dangerous ... The big powers are very strong. Alberto Fujimori, former president of Peru (Ironically, he is now charged with corruption.)

These may seem like wasteful practices until we remember the point of it all. And the task is manageable with new technologies that can store massive amounts of audio, or even transcribe spoken words into print automatically.³² In these ways, *all* the activities of DWG officials would be *100%* transparent. As well, human nature being what it is, we can know in advance that millions of people and thousands of watchdog organizations will be listening to every minute of recorded audio and poring over all the transcribed words in a search for lies, contradictions, equivocations or even the slightest indication of something scandalous or illegal.

There is no government at any level (that I am aware of) that is clean enough or sufficiently immune from corruption to serve as a model for the DWG. The governmental traditions of the past and present seem to dictate that everything is (or may be) kept secret *unless* there is a very good reason to make it public. There must be a new tradition at the DWG, such that *everything is public unless there is a compelling reason as to why it should be kept private*, and even in such instances, the reason for privacy must be made public, and there must be an affordable appeal procedure whereby a decision to conceal information can perhaps be overturned. The people of planet Earth deserve this level of transparency, and therefore we must insist on it. Anything said or done in the public interest must be public. Anything not public is likely not in the public's interest.

Corruption can destroy the strongest democracy if it is not dealt with, so fight it. Former U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell

We cannot afford “politics as usual” at the world level, and this is the price our DWG representatives will have to pay. It is a small price, and the positive value of this system will very easily eclipse all aspects that might be considered “costs” (financial or otherwise).

We simply must manage our global affairs effectively, and we must manage them in a way that deserves to be called “completely open.” The penalty for not doing that may well be that we lose the chance to manage our world at all. We are confident that people will readily adapt to and embrace this kind of complete openness at the DWG. In fact, I fully expect that some people will like it so much they will ask lower-level governments to do likewise.

³² Though not perfectly—all machine-based transcriptions or translations should ideally be proofed by bilingual or multilingual human beings.

Government is more than the sum of all the interests; it is the paramount interest, the public interest. It must be the efficient, effective agent of a responsible citizenry, not the shelter of the incompetent and the corrupt. Adlai Stevenson, 1948

In financial matters, the same level of transparency is needed. Every dollar received or spent by the DWG must be posted on the Internet for any amateur sleuth or any forensic accountant to analyze or question. The accounts must show how much money was spent or received, the persons involved in every transaction, and the reasons for the transfer of funds. Every dollar coming in to or going out of the DWG will be “out there,” on the Internet. This way it would be virtually impossible for the DWG to get into any financial scandal, and that is what we need at the global level, the cleanest government there could ever be—100% clean. And if science can ever perfect lie-detection, our ability to corruption-proof the DWG would be further enhanced.³³ It would also be desirable and necessary for the DWG to appoint a financial watchdog of its own, like an Auditor General in Canada, whose job it would be to scrutinize DWG financial transactions and to review and report on the success or failure of the DWG’s activities.

I repeat; if a person doesn’t want this level of transparency applied to his or her professional life, he or she should surely decide *not* to work for the DWG. No one is being *forced* to work under such conditions, but these conditions are necessary at the DWG, for the sake of all.

Corruption hurts the poor disproportionately by diverting funds intended for development, undermining a government’s ability to provide basic services, feeding inequality and injustice, and discouraging foreign investment and aid. Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, in his statement on the adoption by the General Assembly of the *United Nations Convention against Corruption*

While many people might hesitate to support the creation of a DWG if the new body *did not* have all these seemingly extravagant assurances, now that it seems we are able to set up and maintain all necessary transparency technologies and procedures, there should be little doubt that most people will accept and even celebrate the establishment of the DWG. According to an 18-nation poll (see Appendix #1), most people already do support this goal, but as awareness grows about the possibility of success in the effort to actually establish a DWG, the debate will undoubtedly sharpen, and tougher questions will emerge.

Our insistence on these novel safeguards should assure that the global referendum on DWG gets the highest possible number and percentage of “yes” votes, since we will be guaranteeing ourselves *totally open governance*. We need to remember that scare tactics

³³ Recent technological breakthroughs seem to indicate that it will not be long before *infallible* lie detection is perfected. Having written a two-book novel on this (*The LieDeck Revolution*), I think the advantages of infallible lie detection will greatly outweigh its disadvantages. Note: In January of 2006, the U.S. Department of Defense called for proposals to develop such a LieDeck-type device, which they call a “Remote Personnel Assessment” device, or RPA. See the work of Dr. Jennifer Vendemia in particular, and fMRI-based experiments in general.

and a very well-financed campaign of disinformation effectively prevented the public from accepting the science behind global warming for decades, and the same kinds of dirty, dishonest tricks will likely be used to discredit the movement for democratic world government. As suggested earlier, if we do not have all these safeguards or guarantees of integrity at the new DWG, the referendum to authorize its creation might actually fail. Perhaps worst of all, without these safeguards, the DWG *itself* may fail at some point in the future.

Those who corrupt the public mind are just as evil as those who steal from the public purse. Adlai Stevenson, 1952

It is long past time that we used technology to help achieve the goal of squeaky-clean honesty in government. We can't afford a world government, no matter how democratic it is on paper, if it is vulnerable to the corruption that infects all national, provincial (or state) and local governments upon occasion. The choice that we face is probably between a DWG *with* these spectacular guarantees and no DWG—or perhaps some “Big Brother”-type of world government, as anticipated by Tim Flannery (*The Weather Makers*, page 294—more on this later). For this reason, those who are promoting a global referendum on the creation of the DWG want it to be *crystal clear* that a *key* part of the proposal is this revolutionary aspect of total transparency at the world body.³⁴ To repeat and emphasize—this is not an option; this is a necessity, not because I say so, but for the reasons mentioned above.

The individual is capable of both great compassion and great indifference. [We have] it within [our] means to nourish the former and outgrow the latter. Norman Cousins, American political journalist

Some people who read earlier drafts of this book objected to such close scrutiny. They suggested that this practice would create a “reverse onus,” where DWG politicians and senior public servants would be “presumed guilty until proven innocent.” We know these measures are intrusive, but they only apply to the *official business* dealings of politicians and civil servants, not to their private lives. To argue against these measures seems to defend the right of politicians to lie and cheat, and that is what we would end up with if we declined to “corruption-proof” the DWG—lying and cheating, exactly the way things so often end up at the lower levels of governance.³⁵ There is no good reason to insist on the right of a global politician or a global bureaucrat to be above full professional scrutiny or free to hide facts from the electors who will be, after all, “the boss” of the DWG.

³⁴ Transparency is also policy at Vote World Government, the not-for-profit organization behind this initiative, in order to reassure all those who may wonder who we are or why we do what we do.

³⁵ It is hard to face the fact that dishonesty is quite a natural inclination of our species, even if scientific research and any significant level of observation or perception can confirm this unhappy assessment.

Public- and private-sector corruption ... are among the greatest threats to democratic governance.... Public access to State information promotes transparency, [and] is an essential element for combating corruption and an indispensable condition for ... the enjoyment of human rights. *Declaration of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, XIII Iberoamerican Summit of Chiefs of State and Government*

When you enter many government or corporate buildings, you must sign in, and whether you know it or not, your photograph is taken by security cameras, without your consent. Are they treating you like a felon, or assuming that you are a terrorist until you can prove otherwise? No. Are the post-9/11 security procedures at all airports somehow violating your civil rights or impugning your integrity? I think not, but even if they were, a court challenge would inevitably lead to the judge muttering these words: “Where’s the damage?” When you use an ATM, your photograph is taken. Is this yet one more insult to your honour? No. These are simply prudent and necessary security measures, and they serve your *personal* interest as well as the public interest. Similarly, it is in the personal interest of the politician and the civil servant, as well as in the public interest, to have these DWG security measures put in place, for the protection of all voters *and* for the protection of the DWG as an institution *and* ultimately for the protection of the world.

No man who is corrupt, no man who condones corruption in others, can possibly do his duty by the community. Theodore Roosevelt, 1900

Most human beings are basically honest, decent and law-abiding, and that means that we, the “basically-honest-and-decent people,” have good reason to be upset. It is outrageous that liars and cheaters so often seem to run the show in modern politics, even in *democratic* politics.³⁶ This should go without saying, but I will say it anyway: To genuinely “represent” us honest people, a politician must actually *be* honest. We, the honest people of the world, have to stop being a silent majority and become an *insistent* majority. With a system in place to assure complete transparency, we, the people, could even *trust* politicians, something that many of us haven’t been willing or able to do for quite a long time.

Unthinking respect for authority is the greatest enemy of truth. Albert Einstein

That having been said, however, we must be on guard against a fortress mentality among our global representatives. Fortunately, there are effective forms of corruption

³⁶ As reported in the *Ottawa Citizen* of September 23, 2006: “Hungarian Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany stunned the world this week with his comments that his government had lied ‘morning, evening and night’ in order to win re-election this year. That a politician would lie was no huge surprise—we assume they do it all the time. It was the blunt confession that caught us off guard.... [and] in Hungary, it led to violent demonstrations in the streets.”

deterrence with few undesirable side effects, like staff rotation, whistle-blowing legislation, very strict limitations on employment following a term in office (no lobbying, no directorships and no consultant fees), and a generous pension, subject to forfeiture for wrongdoing. And of course I must add that all of the transparency and corruption-deterrence measures above should also apply to all the participants in any DWG police force that may be required to carry out a peacekeeping or disaster-response task authorized by the DWG, or to take actions needed to enforce any of the judgements of its judicial arm.

It is time to use international co-operation to enforce a policy of zero tolerance of political corruption and to put an end to practices whereby politicians put themselves above the law—stealing from ordinary citizens and hiding behind parliamentary immunity. Akere Muna, President, Transparency International, Cameroon chapter

Democracy means “government of the people, by the people and for the people,”³⁷ and you cannot be *for* the people and lie to them. “No lying ever” has to be the rule at the DWG. For a DWG parliamentarian or civil servant to lie to the entire human race must be considered just as serious an offence as a teacher abusing a child, or a policeman dealing illegal drugs.

Unlimited power is apt to corrupt the minds of those who possess it; and this I know, my lords, that where law ends, tyranny begins.
William Pitt, Prime Minister of Great Britain, 1770

Research indicates that ordinary people tell many lies every single day. One study³⁸ suggests that the average American tells 200 lies *per day*. Most of these are small lies (often called “little white lies”) but still, a lie is a lie, and this number is a shocker. Free people can conduct their *personal* lives however they may wish, within the law. However, at the DWG, we must set things up so that our political representatives and our top bureaucrats *will be caught* by the corruption-proofing system if they lie to us, or to each other, about DWG activities, or about realities at the DWG. And getting caught should be the end of their credibility *and* the end of their careers. World politicians and bureaucrats must maintain the highest levels of integrity, and any serious breach of the people’s trust should result in the loss of a career, a pension, and, if the offence warrants it, the loss of one’s personal freedom (meaning you go to jail). At the DWG, you simply can’t mislead the folks you are paid to serve.

³⁷ There are many books and essays on what democracy is, but I think it’s fair to say that all democrats agree on this basic idea, and I think it is also important to summarize the concept of democracy by using this well-known phrase.

³⁸ By Gerald Jellison, professor of psychology at the University of Southern California, USA. See “200 lies a day keeps chaos away, study finds,” by Linda Jackson, *The Daily Telegraph*, London, UK (reprinted in the *Ottawa Citizen*, April 7, 1997).

Since corrupt people unite amongst themselves to create a force, honest people must do the same. It is as simple as that. Leo Tolstoy,
War and Peace

Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex, and more violent. It takes a touch of genius -- and a lot of courage -- to move in the opposite direction. Albert Einstein

A zero-tolerance rule for lying may seem extreme or “over the top” at first blush, but consider the consequences of lying and deceptive practices in politics. We, the people of planet Earth, cannot afford to have liars in high political offices if the survival of humanity is at stake, and—as I trust you know by now—that is *minimally* what is at stake. It can’t get any simpler than that, so we will do what must be done to assure ourselves that the problem of having dishonest people in politics *does not even come up* at the global level. Lies can no longer be rewarded with power, money or anything else, particularly as we embark on what may well be the “last-chance new beginning”³⁹ for the human race.

Every man [and woman] possesses the right of self-government.
Thomas Jefferson (1743 – 1826; the last words he ever wrote)

After a few decades of corruption-free and totally transparent global governance, I think anyone who says we should discontinue the corruption-proofing aspect or go back to the old system of 194 “completely sovereign” nation states is likely to be laughed at and ostracized, deservedly.

We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark. The real tragedy of life is when men [or women] are afraid of the light. Plato

The “rest-of-human-history,” if there is to be such a thing, can and must be a time of *unprecedented* integrity ... at least in global politics. If the standard of integrity required at the DWG is not the highest possible, the DWG may fail, and if this were to happen, it follows, almost as a statistical certainty, that humanity will commit omnicide, accidentally or intentionally ... *either* of which qualifies as the most idiotic idea that ever was, or ever will be.

³⁹ Or “great turning,” as David Korten calls it in his book, *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*.

Controlled, universal disarmament is the imperative of our time. The demand for it by the hundreds of millions whose chief concern is the long future of themselves and their children will, I hope, become so universal and so insistent that no man, no government anywhere, can withstand it. Dwight D. Eisenhower, address to the Indian parliament, New Delhi, December 10, 1959

Institutions such as a world parliament and a world government would go a long way in eliminating the exclusivism based on race, region, religion and language. Indian Justice P.B. Sawant, President of the WAPC (World Association of Press Councils), 2004

A Parliamentary Assembly would make the UN more transparent, efficient and more democratic. Boutros Boutros-Ghali

Chapter 15

Conclusion

To jaw-jaw is always better than to war-war. Winston Churchill

Democratic government may be a messy business, but it is surely always preferable to war, or to a non-democratic government, or to an absence of political structure where there is an obvious need for governance, as is the case right now at the global level. It is difficult (if not impossible) to argue convincingly that things would get *worse* than they are now if we were to build a new political body at the global level. I am not particularly interested in which side might win a tiresome debate on that hypothetical matter, since the status quo leads us to catastrophe in the near future. I am interested, however, in seeing the global referendum on DWG conducted, and I am interested in seeing the creation of the DWG ... soon.

A great wind is blowing and that gives you either imagination or a headache. Catherine the Great

The day of the armed-and-war-capable city-state ended many centuries ago. The day of the tribal warlord is over too, even though a few are still in business. Terrorism (whether it is non-state, state-sponsored or religious—these distinctions matter little or nothing to the victims) and war are next on the agenda for tossing into the dustbin of history. The struggle to outlaw war and rid ourselves of terror is not going to be won by any one nation, or even a group of nations. Violence-for-gain in all its forms has to be banned by the people, by the human race, by our species *as a whole*, and not by sending national armies into another nation to do regime change,⁴⁰ but rather through a variety of pressures and incentives from a new people's parliament, meaning a democratic world government.

In a few years, the era of the armed-and-war-capable nation state must end too, because that is a precondition for the survival of humanity, as Albert Einstein (and many others) have said. The creation of a directly-elected, representative and democratic world government is surely the only realistic foundation on which we can tackle all of the other supranational problems that bedevil us—racism, climate change, pollution, HIV/AIDS, overpopulation, poverty, and more. A global referendum appears to be the only democratic instrument through which the human race could insist upon and authorize the construction and permanent operation of such an institution.

⁴⁰ Which is illegal under international law no matter how you package it.

A world under law is realistic and attainable. Former UN Secretary-General U Thant

Those who want democratic global governance *must* remember that democracy rests upon and requires the consent of the people, the consent of the governed. That principle applies globally as well as nationally or locally. Before trying to create a world parliament, we must get the necessary consent in hand so we know we are not imposing something on the human race that it does not want. We can easily reduce the goal to a simple ballot question such as: “Do you support the creation of a directly-elected, representative and democratic world government?” The Internet allows us to at least kick-start a global referendum on whether we ought to create such a new world body. The job of finishing a global referendum may well require the passage of a UN resolution and some participation by national governments, but that level of cooperation is unlikely to emerge until we have a “people-power parade” marching down the main street in every city and town in the world—figuratively speaking, anyway—a “yes” campaign that appears to be winning in all nations. Opinion polls are not enough (as mentioned earlier), but if the numbers in such opinion polls are favourable to our cause, they can help us prove our point and acquire allies.

Throughout history it has been the inaction of those who could have acted, the indifference of those who should have known better, the silence of the voice of justice when it mattered most, that has made it possible for evil to triumph. Haile Selassie, then Emperor of Ethiopia, to an opening a Special Session of the UN General Assembly in Addis Ababa, 1963

Humanity is ready for a change in direction, and we expect that a powerful species-wide mandate (66.7%+) exists for the creation of a democratic world government. Reason and experience suggest that in addition to having enormous political weight, our “consent” (as expressed in the global mandate) is destined to evolve into an “authorization,” an unprecedented global *command* that will have to be accepted as *legally binding*, and/or the political equivalent. The global referendum is a realistic strategy, and all that remains to be seen is whether we have what it takes to rise to the challenge, to rescue ourselves, and to basically grow up, as a species ... finally.

We have reached a time in human history where “sovereignty” must be exercised on behalf of our species *as a whole*. We, the people, must take charge of the last few steps along the difficult road from yesteryear’s jungle to tomorrow’s peaceful and secure civilization. We must literally “civilize ourselves,” lest we lose the struggle and exterminate ourselves. The UN should be an important part of all this,⁴¹ and can play a constructive role. But make no mistake; if humanity goes to the trouble of conducting the

⁴¹ Its past impotence is perhaps best described by General Roméo Dallaire (now a Canadian Senator) in his book *Shake Hands with the Devil* (now a feature film), in which he tells of his time in Rwanda, charged with stopping genocide but denied the mandate, equipment and boots on the ground to do his job by the cowardice and dithering of his UN masters.

global referendum to demand and authorize the creation of a democratic world government and the vote passes strongly, that mandate *must* be honoured, that institution *must* be created, and the DWG *must* play the *pre-eminent* role in establishing and maintaining a genuine and permanent peace in the world. If we can at last rid the human condition of all terrorism and war, we would no more go back to those obscene traditions than we would go back to the practice of human sacrifice, or slavery, or any of the other hideous abominations from our sad and embarrassing past.⁴²

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men [and women] to do nothing. Edmund Burke (1729–1797), attributed

It is time for people to decide whether they are for democracy or not. If we are for it, then we must surely be “for it” at the global level, and we have to improve it with whatever corruption-proofing or “transparency” measures and technologies are available to us. And if we are for democracy at the global level, we must face the disturbing fact that we don’t have it yet, and recognize that we now know exactly what we have to do to get it. I hope for the sake of all that we are up to this historic challenge. I call upon every person, every government and every other institution in the world to support this effort in whatever ways they are able.

Hearken not to the voice which petulantly tells you that the form of government recommended ... is impossible to accomplish. James Madison, No. 14 of *The Federalist Papers*, 1787-88 (all 85 essays were published under the pen name Publius)

⁴² It may turn out to be a bit like quitting cigarettes; it is really hard at first, but it gradually gets easier until you finally reach a really nice new “normal” where you hardly remember that you ever smoked at all. People don’t sit around today wistfully wishing that they could see a human sacrifice, or wishing they could buy a couple of slaves or behead a really annoying neighbour, do they? No, but our ancestors did, almost as a full-time job. We are *so over* all that.



If you haven't done this yet, please go now to www.voteworldgovernment.org and cast your vote in the global referendum on democratic world government, then contact your friends and family and ask them to do likewise.