

## Preface

The world now stands on the edge of the abyss facing two existential threats, runaway climate change and nuclear war. These are the flip sides to the same coin, industrialisation.

It has only taken 150 years of industrialisation to cause atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> to exceed the safe limit to avoid runaway climate change. This is two average human life spans; an immeasurably small time period compared to the millions of years of relative climatic stability that led to our evolution. Today CO<sub>2</sub> is increasing super exponentially and within a very few years it will be far above the levels appropriate for us to sustain our civilisation and quite probably for the planet to sustain life. Despite the clarity of the scientific evidence, despite the evidence on the ground from crop failures to super storms, nineteen rounds of international climate change talks with all the best intentions have resulted in nineteen failures. To think the 20th or the 21st will succeed is naivety. The world has become so used to failure that the disaster of the last climate conferences in Qatar and Poland was barely noted by the world's press. We must collectively acknowledge that there is a structural failure in the process threatening us all.

Industrialisation has also brought the military industrial complex. There is a symbiotic relationship between the two. You cannot have a military industrial complex without industrialisation and industrialising nations need a military industrial complex to secure resources and markets. The apex of this is the possession of nuclear weapons. As our planet becomes more unstable due to the climate change caused by industrialisation then governments around the world will seek and are seeking protection by nuclear weapons. The grand intentions of the 1967 Nuclear Non Proliferation treaty which obligated existing nuclear powers to disarm at the earliest possible time and non nuclear armed nations to remain as such have all but collapsed.

This comes at a huge price. To build a credible nuclear threat a massive military industrial complex is needed and this must be funded by an exponentially expanding economy to raise the taxes. But a carbon intensive military industrial complex and expanding economy are the antithesis of what is needed to tackle climate change and resource depletion. Building these increases the risk they are trying to protect against. It is the ultimate death spiral.

Swirling around these two intensifying threats is economic collapse. The 2008 banking crisis can be blamed on many things such as greedy bankers, deregulation and a debt based financial system. But the underlying cause of its failure was steeply rising oil and food prices. This comprehensively punctured the illusion of continuous future growth which forms the basis of our entire financial system. Large portions of populations such as the sub-prime mortgage borrowers in the USA suddenly found themselves priced into the margins of society as staple price rises transformed their struggles for survival to chaotic descents into debt from which there was no escape. Once the rubicon was crossed and confidence in the financial system was lost the crash spread virally from one banking institution to the next quickly consuming whole economies. The world's banking system, and with it the global economy, came to within 24

hours of a total crash.

The dangerously high levels of interconnectivity between all the nodes of the financial system suddenly became clear, but in the aftermath its interconnectivity with the environment and resource dependency were still not truly acknowledged. Rather than take the crisis as a warning of what is to come and adjust accordingly, the world's governments worked together to preserve the destructive and unsustainable system that we are all trapped within. But what is unsustainable will not be sustained and the longer we leave the crisis unattended the bigger the fall when it comes.

The result of the effort to preserve the status quo is that both climate change and nuclear weapons proliferation have gone to the bottom of the to-do list of politicians, to the margins of interest of news editors and virtually out of the consciousness of the average global citizen who is preoccupied with the struggle to survive. At least the occasional climate change disaster such as Hurricane Sandy or the flooding of the United Kingdom briefly brings climate change to the fore, but even events of the magnitude of these do not bring conviction and unity on the crisis. Few politicians see the reality of the warnings and instead limit debate to talk about how infrastructural resilience can be improved and how we can adapt with out changing. Incredibly, in the midst of the crisis doubts continue to be raised about either the robustness of the science or the futility of taking action when other nations continue to pollute and there is never even any discussion of fundamental change. The quality of debate on nuclear weapons proliferation is even worse. Despite global spending on nuclear weapons rising to new levels and nearly bankrupt countries committing to vast expenditure, awareness by politicians and members of the public of the inherent military and economic risks associated with these decisions is virtually zero.

If there is to be a path that provides us with hope it has to be made from the recognition that the crises facing our planet are highly interconnected and that one cannot be solved without tackling the others simultaneously. It means that climate change, nuclear war and economic stability must be considered holistically. This is totally absent from today's attempts to find solutions to these pressing problems.

By contrast, strategies are sought to tackle climate change, nuclear proliferation and global financial management in isolation. The result is the same for each, total failure. Success relies on agreement to be found in these three difficult and contentious areas simultaneously. The chance of this is less than a single atom being found within all the atoms that make this planet. Today, all that is offered for hope are the untested hypotheses that our global economy can painlessly transition to renewables for energy, that localisation can solve food production, that nuclear weapons will stay under control and that somehow the economy will not crash. These are laudable aims we must strive for. Acres of print has been devoted to each of these, but to get there is a much more complicated challenge than is recognised. We are already past time to start making the change to stop the cancer of fossil fuel consumption from killing the planet. The pages that follow will not dwell on the details of the solutions, these have already been adequately covered by many other authors, instead

they will concentrate on what is stopping us from getting started. This is the fundamental need for every nation within the global community to compete at increasing levels of intensity, both economically and militarily. This is the basis of “*business as usual*” and it is this that cannot continue. The starting point is to integrate climate change agreements and the possession of nuclear weapons. This drastic change puts security agreements and political change at the heart of climate change negotiations enabling the difficult transition to a zero carbon economy to be made safely by all nations in a world that is being made less safe by the effects of industrialisation. This will cause the most profound changes in the history of humanity. It will challenge every aspect of our society and the very sanctity of the nation-state. It forces into recognition the inherent failures of the industrial democratic system that has evolved as the premier means of governance, but which is fundamentally unsuited to implementing the solutions to climate change. It challenges the structure of the United Nations and the grip that the P-5 security council has on global affairs.

But none of this is sacrosanct. Immediately after the 1939 to 1945 struggles for the survival of nation-states and industrial democracy, the concept of the nation-state was fundamentally challenged as world leaders realised the terrifying paradigm shift that nuclear weapons had caused. This challenge was led by Bernard Baruch in 1946 on behalf of President Truman. He made the far reaching proposal that nuclear weapons and the nuclear industry be transferred to a supranational institution with powers above and beyond those of the nation state. It was the most important international proposal to ever be put forward on the world stage and offered a future based on cooperation rather than competition. But in the mutual mistrust that peppered the early days of the Cold War, it failed. Instead of cooperation on nuclear weapons, the super powers of the day locked themselves into nuclear competition, joined later by other emerging powers. In presenting his case to the United Nations, Bernard Baruch said, “*In this crisis, we represent not only our governments but, in a larger way, we represent the peoples of the world. We must remember that the peoples do not belong to the governments but that the governments belong to the peoples. We must answer their demands; we must answer the world’s longing for peace and security.*” Now that we face the joint crises of climate change, nuclear war and financial collapse his comments and concept have never been more apt. It has also never been more important that we go back to his concept, learn from its failure to be implemented and develop the concept further to cope with the mutual threat of climate change. This time, we have no choice. We must make it work and doing so will be the hardest challenge humanity will have faced. But we should expect nothing less; climate change is an existential and mutual threat brought on by our own actions and it is our defining issue. The solutions that we adopt to this crisis will not lie in the technological brilliance needed to create a zero carbon economy, but in political change and this is the thing that nobody wants to discuss. By contrast, as hard as people campaign for a change to business as usual, those who hold power fight harder to preserve the status quo of the existing political structures, because politics is about power.

The fight against climate change has now been lost so doing what is suggested

here will not will not guarantee success, but failure to do so will guarantee the very worse nightmare scenarios and we will face the Shakespearean tragedy of Macbeth writ large where the reach for power destroys everything of value.