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The End Of Tomorrow: Have We Lost Control? Do We Still Have Time To Stop The Inevitable? Soon We Will Know It's All About Leadership

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The End of Tomorrow

***Have we lost control of the future?
Do we still have time to stop the
inevitable?***

***Soon we will know. It's all about
Leadership.***

EMILIO IODICE, LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO (VP), JOHN FELICE ROME CENTER (DIR), AUTHOR OF “FUTURE SHOCK 2.0, THE DRAGON BRIEF”

Introduction

Rarely in history, have so many dangerous, global events developed at the same time that threaten the existence of humanity. Global warming, a worsening economic crisis, pandemics, and international terrorism are happening today with each demanding worldwide solutions. Anyone of them can be sited as a lethal risk to the progress we have made in human rights, abolishing governance by fear and oppression, promoting prosperity, and the spread of democracy. The difficulties are magnified by the perception that we lack the strong, wise, courageous, ethical, and experienced leadership we need to bring us through this period.

As we finish the second decade of the 21st century, we are seeing these threats take hold. Can we deal with all of them simultaneously or will the synergy of these deadly occurrences smother our ability to control the future? Can we predict the outcome? Do we still have time to alter the direction of our collective and individual destiny? Will we and our leaders be up to the task?

Up to now, climate change, the rapid expansion of worldwide joblessness, the threat to international wellbeing and security, and the weakness of leadership have been presented in scientific, technical, financial, and political terms. Once we see the human suffering, the picture becomes frighteningly clear.

Scientific Evidence Supports the Threat of Global Warming

Global warming has been portrayed in countless studies about the now irreversible nature of our planet overheating. One of the most recent was the White House Report entitled the *National Climate Assessment*.¹

It illustrated these facts:

- The global climate is being altered by human activities and mainly by the burning of fossil fuels. Climate change threatens human health and well-being in many ways,

including through more extreme weather events and wildfires, decreased air quality, and diseases transmitted by insects, food, and water.

- Water quality is deteriorating across the globe. Human-induced climate change is projected to continue, and it will accelerate significantly if global emissions of heat-trapping gases continue to increase.
- Oceans are becoming warmer and more acidic, destroying vital marine life and permanently changing ecosystems reducing a vital source of protein for the people of the planet.
- Measures to reduce fossil fuel emissions are not enough to prevent catastrophic damage to the environment that will be soon be impossible to reverse.

Systematic proof is everywhere yet the toll on humanity is seldom made evident.

In *Overheated: The Human Cost of Climate Change*, UC Berkeley Professor of Law, Andrew Guzman, foretells a gruesome account for countless millions in the 21st century. In the February 9, 2013 publication of *Science Daily*,² Guzman spelled out what he sees ahead. His findings were based on scientific realities:

- “Flooding and forced migration will push citizens to crowded cities or refugee camps, creating ripe conditions for the spread of infectious diseases. It could lead to a global pandemic similar to the 1918 Spanish Flu that killed 3 percent of the world's population. In the U.S. today, that would mean nine-ten million deaths.
- California's *Sierra Snowpack*, its most important water source, will have shrunk by a third by 2050. No plan exists for how the state will find enough water for its projected 50 million residents.
- Rising seas will displace populations, ruin farmland, and destroy infrastructure. Bangladesh alone will lose 17 percent of its land mass, the equivalent of the U.S. losing Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, and every inch of land to the East.
- Rainfall-dependent crop production in Nigeria may fall by 50 percent. Social chaos and the fight over dwindling oil resources could lead to the creation of a terrorist breeding ground.
- Water flow to the Indus River could drop off by 35 percent as glaciers melt. India and Pakistan, which have had 4 wars since the 1940s, will have to share this shrinking resource. At issue is life and death for tens of millions on both sides of the border – and both countries have nuclear weapons.”

In that same issue, *Science Daily* made this point in talking with Professor Guzman: “Solving this problem is not going to be free. But as long as politicians are punished for imposing economic costs now in exchange for larger economic gains later, it will be an impossible problem to solve,” he said.

In fact, the world’s largest emitters of the greenhouse gases (GHG) that cause global warming – the U.S., the E.U., China, India, and Brazil – have failed to come to a substantive agreement to reduce carbon output.¹ Carbon dioxide is one of the most damaging of the GHG emissions.

¹ Editor’s Note: On November 12, 2014, Chinese leader Xi Jinping and President Obama entered an agreement to limit greenhouse gases with China. China has pledged to both cap its rapidly growing carbon emissions by 2030 as well as increase the use of non-fossil fuels to 20 percent of the country’s energy sources. President Obama has pledged to cut U.S. emissions between 26 to 28 percent by 2025. See http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/china-us-agree-to-limit-greenhouse-gases/2014/11/11/9c768504-69e6-11e4-9fb4-a622dae742a2_story.html.

Guzman is convinced that U.S. will balk at signing any international accord until its people demand it.

Little appears to be happening at the official level to prevent the inevitable from occurring. This is so in spite of the clear and present danger to our planet, and the likelihood that our children and their children may be deprived of their livelihoods.

On September 23, 2014, Hollywood celebrity Leonardo DiCaprio addressed the United Nations General Assembly Climate Summit Conference as the new UN Messenger of Peace.³ He said the following:

“As an actor, I pretend for a living. I play fictitious characters, often solving fictitious problems... I believe that mankind has looked at climate change in that same way – as if it were a fiction, as if pretending that climate change wasn't real would somehow make it go away...To be clear, this is not about just telling people to change their light bulbs or to buy a hybrid car; this disaster has grown beyond the choices that individuals make...None of this is rhetoric, none of it is hysteria – it is a fact... This is now about our industries and our governments around the world taking decisive and large-scale action.”

The Great Recession Has Reached Global Proportions

In addition to the effects of climate change, the people of the planet are struggling with growing economic insecurity. The Great Recession that began in 2008 continues to worsen. Its effects threaten prosperity in developed nations and are deepening poverty in emerging countries.

Last April, Jaime Caruna, General Manager of the Bank for International Settlements, gave a lecture at the Kennedy School of Harvard University, entitled: “Global Economic and Financial Challenges: A Tale of Two Views.”⁴ Caruna explained the following:

“It has been over five years since the height of the global financial crisis, but the global economy is still struggling to shake off chronic post-crisis weakness. This weakness can be portrayed with a number of stylized facts about the global economy:

- ***“Output and productivity trends have been disappointing. In those economies on both sides of the Atlantic that were front and center in the crisis, recovery has been slow by historical standards...Unemployment is still above pre-crisis levels.***
- ***For the G20 economies combined, the total debt of private non-financial sectors has risen by close to 30% since the crisis.***
- ***Fiscal policy remains under strain. In crisis-hit economies, fiscal deficits have ballooned as a result of the fall in revenues...debt-to-GDP ratios have continued to rise and in some cases look to be on an unsustainable path.***
- ***Monetary policy has been testing its limits.***
- ***Economies that were not directly hit by the crisis, including many emerging market economies, have generally done better, but are now also slowing down...There are signs that financial imbalances have been building up in some of these economies, making them vulnerable to changes in global liquidity conditions.”***

In effect, the situation is getting worse. The World Bank's World Development Report of 2014⁵ claims that 30 million jobs have been lost since 2007 and the global pool of the unemployed is over 200 million and rising:

“Dwindling job prospects and falling incomes in turn challenge the global development efforts and threaten a reversal of hard-won development gains around the world... What is more striking is millions of people fell, or are at risk of falling, into extreme poverty and exclusion in advanced countries. In the United States, the epicenter of the financial crisis, poverty rates

rose in 2008-11 to 15 percent of the population. In Europe, more than 16 percent live below the poverty threshold, particularly in Eastern and Southern Europe. Poverty is higher among women, children, and youth, and single-parent families deprived of the opportunity to share risk within the family.”

Last year, the UN Special Rapporteur on Slavery reported the toll of the crisis, explaining that slavery, human trafficking, violation of the rights of children and women, and violent crime were growing around the world, risking much of the progress made in the battle for human rights. Governments have signed accords to fight these problems, yet enforcement is poor and inhibited by political corruption and official incompetence.⁶

Caritas, one of the world’s largest care-giving NGOs, claims that five years after the global downturn began, poverty is increasing rapidly. Millions of people are becoming poorer each year, including in developed countries.⁷

Pandemics are Increasing

In addition to the intensification of poverty, the world may be experiencing a long term period of pandemics. Recently, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) predicted that Ebola cases will reach between 550,000 to 1.4 million by January, 2015 and could move beyond the shores of Africa.

The Future Agenda, the World in 2020,⁸ forecasts that at least three major pandemics will happen in those parts of the planet with the most limited health care facilities, at a time when population in these areas is growing and their consumption of finite natural resources is increasing. Such a volatile mix could lead to the uncontrollable spread of disease in those places least able to manage it. It is likely to spread across their borders. Many of these nations also face mounting turmoil from fundamentalist extremism.

Terrorism Has Put Nations on a War Footing

The US National Commission on Terrorism, in its report, *Countering the Changing Threat of International Terrorism*,⁹ reported the following to the US Congress:

International terrorism poses an increasingly dangerous and difficult threat to America... Today’s terrorists seek to inflict mass casualties, and they are attempting to do so both overseas and on American soil. They are less dependent on state sponsorship and are, instead, forming loose, transnational affiliations based on religious or ideological affinity and a common hatred of the United States. This makes terrorist attacks more difficult to detect and prevent... U.S. policies must firmly target all states that support terrorists.

That study, prepared in Washington, DC, was presented in 2000. Since then, radicalism has grown exponentially and millions of people have become refugees.

According to the *New York Times*, the latest struggle with the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, (ISIS) is expected to last years. New groups are rising in the Middle East and elsewhere, similar to the ancient Greek story of the hydra which was a monster with many heads. Once one was cut off, two would grow in its place.

In effect, the US Department of State said this in its *2013 Country Reports on Terrorism*:¹⁰

While the international community has severely degraded AQ’s (Al Qaeda) core leadership, the terrorist threat has evolved. Leadership losses in Pakistan, coupled with weak governance and instability in the Middle East and Northwest Africa, have accelerated the decentralization of the movement and led to the affiliates in the AQ network becoming more operationally autonomous from core AQ and increasingly focused on local and regional objectives. The past several years have seen the emergence of a more aggressive set of AQ affiliates and like-minded groups, most notably in Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Northwest Africa, and Somalia.

We Need the Right Kind of Leaders

None of the perils we are facing, either in the case of terrorism, economic decline, or damage to the environment is new. They have been with us before. We have talked about them for decades. In the past, our leaders found solutions. They inspired us to join them as they led the way to overcome, what seemed at the time, insurmountable challenges. Yet why is it that today our leaders are unable and unwilling to make courageous decisions? Why is it that today problems turn into emergencies and then into calamities? The reason is an absence of the right kind of leadership.

Financier George Soros, Chairman of Soros Fund Management and Chairman of the Open Society Foundations, in the January 2, 2014 issue of *Project Syndicate* said the following: “The...great unresolved problem is the absence of proper global governance. The lack of agreement among the United Nations Security Council’s five permanent members is exacerbating humanitarian catastrophes in countries like Syria – not to mention allowing global warming to proceed largely unhindered. But, in contrast to the Chinese conundrum, which will come to a head in the next few years, the absence of global governance may continue indefinitely.”¹¹

The Central Problem is *Real* Leadership

It is easy to blame leaders. The real fault lies with **each of us**. If we admit this and insist on the right kind of leadership, we will solve the world’s quandaries. To do so, we must set the standards and benchmarks high and select leaders who have the qualities to tell us the truth and engage us to join them in overcoming our challenges before they overcome us.

What are the traits that we should insist upon so that we pick *real* leaders who will bring us through the most complex predicaments ever faced by mankind?

1. **Real Leaders Visualize a Better Future:** They can articulate a clear picture of a better future which they want to create along with us. They should know what is ethically right and wrong. They have a moral compass that guides them and governs their behavior. If their purpose is self-focused, they are not leaders. Real leaders examine the impact of their decisions on an inter-connected, flat world. “Leadership is a choice, not a position or a promotion. Leadership is a way of life, like faith and religion. You practice it if you believe in it, and you act according to those beliefs. If more people around the world start practicing the religion of *leaderism*... the world will become a much better and safer place.”¹²
2. **Real Leaders Have Character:** Trust is everything. Today, we take leaders to task for a lack of character. We need to insist that they be rooted in honor, ethics, and integrity. They must show us their values and beliefs and that they practice them for the betterment of all.
3. **Real Leaders are Passionate:** Charisma helps but it must go with talent, commitment, and the willingness to sacrifice matched with a sense of enthusiasm and optimism.
4. **Real Leaders Communicate:** It drives the entire process of leadership, from transmitting a vision and strategy and convincing others about our intentions and integrity to the results expected.
5. **Real Leaders are Flexible:** Emotional intelligence, experience, the willingness to listen and create a win-win situation requires flexibility. Ideology and dogmatism do not work. New solutions are created only in an atmosphere of flexibility and openness.

6. **Real Leaders are Comfortable with Ambiguity:** Change is to be expected. Wise leaders anticipate it. They relish it. They navigate well through globalization, diversity, and interpersonal relations. Effective leaders lead in an atmosphere of constant change.
7. **Real Leaders Like People:** Someone who dislikes people should not lead. People bring about problems. They also provide solutions. Successful ones develop a brain trust of the best and brightest to be part of their team.
8. **Real Leaders Love Knowledge:** The best leaders know what they do not know. Astute leaders hunger for knowledge and are curious. The ones best able to solve complex problems are those who ask the best questions. Real leaders do not need to know all the answers, but constant learning helps them develop the right questions.
9. **Real Leaders Understand Collaboration:** The world is becoming more horizontal. It is based on networks that depend on influence and inspiration instead of command and control. The leaders who will bring us through the current age are those who can operate a collaborative model where they are in the center of a web versus on top of a pyramid. This demands understanding dependency on others and the value of human capital and empathy. The willingness to respect, appreciate, and comprehend the point of view of the other side is essential. Without this last quality, no leader will be able to deal with the great dilemmas of our era.

Once we have real leaders in place, we will assure that tomorrow will come and be better than today.

Endnotes

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- ⁴ Speech by Mr. Jaime Caruana, General Manager of the Bank for International Settlements, prepared for a lecture at the Harvard Kennedy School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, 9 April 2014. <http://www.bis.org/speeches/sp140409.htm>. “Global economic and financial challenges: a tale of two views.” Bank for International Settlements, Basel, Switzerland.
- ⁵ The World Bank, Let’s Talk Development, the Blog of the Chief Economist of the World Bank, “Seeing the Human Face of the Global Financial Crisis,” by Inci Otker-Robe On Mon, 11/04/2013 co-authors: Anca Maria Podpiera, <http://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/seeing-human-face-global-financial-crisis>.
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- ¹¹ George Soros is Chairman of Soros Fund Management and Chairman of the Open Society Foundations. *The World Economy's Shifting Challenges*, Project Syndicate, January 2, 2014.
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- ¹³ Forbes, There is no Such Thing as Bad Leadership, Rajeev Peshawaria, August 8, 2011, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/rajeevpeshawaria/2011/08/19/there-is-no-such-thing-as-bad-leadership/>.
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About the Author

Professor Iodice spent over three decades as a senior executive in the public and private sectors, as an educator and now as a university administrator. He joined Loyola University in 2007 as Director of the John Felice Rome Center. In 2008, he was promoted to Vice President of the University. During those thirty years of experience, he was also a key official in Washington working under several Administrations. He was named by the President to the Senior Executive Service when he was thirty-three and considered the youngest public servant to reach the highest levels of federal service.



In the US diplomatic corps, he was among the most decorated officers in history and was awarded the Gold Medal for heroism, a Gold Medal for exemplary service, and the Silver Medal and nominated for two Bronze Medals. His honors include being knighted by the former king of Italy and receiving Medals of Honor from Spain and Italy.

Iodice speaks several languages and has traveled across the globe. His passions in life are the Rome Center, its staff, faculty and students, Loyola University, good music, writing, reading, his family and, in particular, his grandchildren. He is considered an accomplished public speaker

and author. His recent books include: *Profiles in Leadership from Caesar to Modern Times*; *A Kid from Philadelphia*, *Mario Lanza, the Voice of the Poets and Sisters*. His latest books, *Reflections, Stories of Power, Love, Inspiration and Remembrance* (http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss_1?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=reflections+by+emilio+iodice&rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3Areflections+by+emilio+iodice) and *Future Shock 2.0, The Dragon Brief* (http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=future+shock+2.0+by+emilio+iodice) have been recently published.

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