



# Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence

*Christian Parenti*

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## **Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence** Christian Parenti

From Africa to Asia and Latin America, the era of climate wars has begun. Extreme weather is breeding banditry, humanitarian crisis, and state failure. In *Tropic of Chaos*, investigative journalist Christian Parenti travels along the front lines of this gathering catastrophe--the belt of economically and politically battered postcolonial nations and war zones girding the planet's midlatitudes. Here he finds failed states amid climatic disasters. But he also reveals the unsettling presence of Western military forces and explains how they see an opportunity in the crisis to prepare for open-ended global counterinsurgency.

Parenti argues that this incipient "climate fascism"--a political hardening of wealthy states-- is bound to fail. The struggling states of the developing world cannot be allowed to collapse, as they will take other nations down as well. Instead, we must work to meet the challenge of climate-driven violence with a very different set of sustainable economic and development policies.

## **Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence Details**

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## From Reader Review Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence for online ebook

### Shawn says

This book does a wonderful job of what it does, which may not be what you're going to expect it to do if you judge from the title. It's a great summary of how much of the tropical world got to its current state as a result of colonialism, surging population, the games played by both sides in the Cold War in these countries and the aftermath of those games (the facts that many of them are awash in weapons provided by both sides and that they haven't had stable governments since). Parenti also makes clear the fact that, although Republicans don't officially believe in human-induced climate change, the military clearly does and is moving to prepare for some of the catastrophes that can be expected. And he writes briefly about how the terrible conditions in the countries he reviews will be exacerbated by that climate change.

But if you're expecting climate change and its impact on the Third World to be the real focus of the book, in any detailed sense, I think you'll be disappointed. He also seems wildly optimistic, given the fact that he admits that we simply don't have the political will to do what's needed.

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### Joan says

This book was a real candidate for the "cannot finish" category but I gritted my teeth and got through it. Let me say upfront that this is an important book and presents its case thoroughly. It is an academic book in many ways, with a vocabulary that often lost me and I have a pretty extensive vocabulary! Parenti's writing style does feel academic as well: this book is not going to end up on the NYT bestseller list by any means. His topic is really how society is dealing with and is going to deal with the violence that will result from climate change. To put it in nonacademic terms, this book is a real downer! The societal conflicts already happening that can be traced to climate change are pretty appalling, and I certainly had not heard of most of them. I do feel in a few of his examples that he is overreaching in ascribing the cause of the conflict being climate change, but in most of his examples, his case is all too convincing. His final chapter is much more upbeat, mentioning what can be done to mitigate climate change. As he points out, climate change is happening and cannot be stopped but only mitigated. He agrees that we still have time to stop the worst effects if we take governmental level action. Leasing solar panels (with none of my money used for the panels), as I did last year, is not a big enough step to ultimately make any real difference in slowing down climate change. But where it can help is in changing the public perception of climate change as an urgent problem that needs dealing with right now! We need action by the government to really get a chance on dealing with the problem.

The very latest move by the State Department shows that that part of government is still in complete thrall to the oil companies and Koch brothers. It claims that the Keystone XL won't impact the environment which is complete and utter nonsense. So our current political environment seems to say that the US government still has its head buried in the tar sands (phrase borrowed from deposed former San Diego Mayor, Bob Filner) which is very frightening. Parenti suggests that much can be done by the various departments of government and by the President to mitigate climate change. I suppose we can only hope that some of our policy makers have an easier time reading this book than I did and that they take vigorous and prompt action on the issue.

I do recommend this book but only if you are determined to explore all aspects of climate change. Take a look at my climate change shelf in Goodreads for quite a few more titles on the subject that are easier reading.

## Diogenes says

"In much of the world, it seems that the only solidarity forthcoming in response to climate change is an exclusionary tribalism, and the only state policy available is police repression. This is not 'natural' and inevitable but rather the result of a history--particularly the history of the Global North's use and abuse of the Global South--that has destroyed the institutions and social practices that would allow a different, more productive response."

"There must be another path. The struggling states of the Global South cannot collapse without eventually taking wealthy economies down with them. If climate change is allowed to destroy whole economies and nations, no amount of walls, guns, barbed wire, armed aerial drones, or permanently deployed mercenaries will be able to save one half of the planet from the other."

Apocryphal? For sure, but Parenti writes a necessary and repeated hammer-blow to the head for all those sitting on their thumbs, shoving their heads into the sand, or blind with denial. Whether "climate change" is normal along the vast longitudinal line marking ice ages, continental plate shifts, and the molten magnetic core flipping directions, or a human-induced catastrophe wrecking ecosystems, wiping out millions of other species, and despoiling our own means of survival, *Tropic of Chaos* is "big picture" stuff, undergirding global social-political shifts (mass migration, exploitation of natural and human resources on a grand scale, warmongering, revolutions, poverty, consolidation of wealth, etc.) with current trends in weather (vicious drought-flood cycles, deforestation, desertification, the depletion of water tables, super-storms, etc.), or what the author deftly terms as "catastrophic convergence": the collision of political, economic, and environmental disasters impacting billions around the world. Humanity is a herd animal, and (forgive the mixed metaphor) we very much behave the same way insect colonies do when forced to make hard choices that push us outside the comfort of the hive. From *Lord of the Flies* to *The Walking Dead*, Freud's Primal Horde Theory plays out in perfect illustrations. For all Freud's problematic (and sometimes ridiculous) ideas, this theory rings most true to me, as he described it in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1922): "Just as primitive man virtually survives in every individual, so the primal horde may arise once more out of any random crowd; in so far as men are habitually under the sway of group formation we recognize in it the survival of the primal horde."

This is troglodytic survivalism at its feral core. Any war zone proves this time and time again, and look at what's transpired since this title was published in 2011. From Aleppo to Juarez, Kashmir to Somalia, the web of socio-political-environmental forces are fiercely in motion.

Of course I'm reading Golding now, which lends some credence to the concept, but *Tropic of Chaos* isn't fiction or theory. Read current news about refugees, about failed and failing governments, the fragile financial system, about plutocracies and kleptocracies, the proliferation of weapons world-wide, and about war in the twenty-first century. "Climate change" is but one piece to the sociological puzzle, but in many parts of the world it is a catalyst for entrenched poverty and inequality, as well as the reactionary behaviors of governments/despots/"terror organizations" to use brute force in the "lifeboat politics of armed adaptation."

This delicate, precious aquarium of oxygen floating around the vast, lifeless vacuum of space is in flux, and the "insects" of mankind are reacting to it subconsciously, while those with power consciously consolidate whatever they can, be it potable water, crude oil, main battle tanks, or South China Sea atolls. As Sven Lindqvist wrote in *Exterminate All the Brutes*:

"The pressure of the hungry and desperate billions has not yet become so great that world leaders see Kurtz's solution as the only humane, the only possible, but fundamentally sound one. But that day is not far off. I see it coming. That is why I read history."

That is why I read it too.

\*Other key terms: anthropogenic climate change and criminogenic relative deprivation.

PS: typed this up on the iPad. Formatting apparently sucks.

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## Tinea says

*We see forms of violent adaptations [to climate change] emerging. In the Global South these take the forms of: ethnic irredentism, religious fanaticism, rebellion, banditry, narcotics trafficking, and small-scale resource wars [like] over water and cattle. ... In the North, the multi-layered crisis appears as **the politics of the armed lifeboat**: the preparations for open-ended counterinsurgency, militarized borders, aggressive anti-immigrant policing, and a mainstream proliferation of rightwing xenophobia. (p. 226) This is the face of climate change. Drought and flood in Mexico and Central America are expressed, later and elsewhere, as the ICE detention gulag. ... Already we see the forms that adaptation in the developed world will take. The de facto authoritarian, cryptoracist state hardening, encapsulated by the war on immigrants, will accelerate as climate-change-driven migration becomes an ever more pressing issue. (p.214)*

Parenti argues that climate change has already hit hard. In poor countries we see droughts leading to conflict and crop failure (famine) and then mass migrations to the rich Global North. In the North we see reactionary border militarization and offensive 'counterinsurgency' wars for population and resource control in the South. Tropic of Chaos is a just as dire but more palatable, pro-governance version of Derrick Jensen's Endgame. The book is a nearly hopeless statement of fact that we as a species are fucked because of climate change. It's a tight condemnation of the interacting structural causes consequences of eco-social disaster. It's an urgent flash of light on a militarized political process already put in operation by rightwing public climate deniers: what Parenti calls the 'armed lifeboat.'

The book itself is a little too sweeping and airy to be the final word-- it's a light tour of cultures, events, and ecological phenomenon-- and Parenti's a little clumsy on some of the case study synthesis (with the notable exception of US border militarization; Parenti's background is in prisons and policing). But the *idea* is incredibly important, one of those new perspectives that is so obvious and clear only after the right person has summed it up. If you can't get the book, it's worth trying to read the first few chapters online (not quite enough is excerpted here) or listening to some interviews (maybe this, this, or this).

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## Nils says

A decent journalistic account of how climate change is driving conflict, a classic example of an author thinking that the plural of anecdote is evidence. What's more interesting is the way Parenti argues that the sorts of conflicts that will be created (or at any rate exacerbated) by climate change will be low intensity & urban and that therefore the COIN technologies being developed to deal with the post-9/11 GWOT will actually find a second life as a way to contain and manage the malign political effects of climate change. But Parenti also makes the acute observation that unless COIN-style pacification is accompanied by effective

state capacity building what ends up left behind (assuming successful suppression of the ideologically motivated insurgency) is a battered social fabric subject to centrifugal, unaccountable, violent, criminogenic forces -- in other words, the central forces that drive deviant globalization.

Parenti also argues that the "matrix of governance" (police, courts, taxes, age labor, ID mgmt, conscription, jails, health care, water mgmt, primary education, veterinary svcs, etc) is moving away from the state toward non-state actors and shifting away from the modernist paradigm of "control" toward a process of "containment." Social breakdown and erosion of state capacity form a mutually reinforcing vicious cycle (p 85). "In failed states social breakdown is the norm; yet, governance and administration are never totally absent. They exist, but in spectral form. It is as if the failed state has reverted to older, tributary methods of domination and reciprocity. Because state failure is relative, in most so-called failed states government is a semifunctional ruin--the state as improvised afterlife... Among the ruins of modernity past, the institutions of sovereignty rot and fade like old documents and the colonial offices that house them." Parenti argues that state collapse represents a "bizarre inversion" of Rostow's "stage theory" of development: gradual decline, with each loss building on the last.

Finally, Parenti puts all this in the right historical frame by showing how it was the neoliberal deconstruction of the state (privatization of production & downsizing of safety nets) over the course of the 1980s and 1990s that eroded the centralized political authority and governance capacity, leaving societies unable to deal with the forthcoming biopolitical crises that climate change will cause or exacerbate. People will turn to whatever nonstate actors, often criminal, who can provide them a modicum of shelter from the coming storms, both physical and political.

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## **Utkarsh says**

"THE" book- Period! A must read for anyone who has ever held an iota of concern for the environment. More so for him/her who hasn't. Beautifully portrays the interdependence of societal stability with climate, and the acceleration of the former's collapse catalyzed by climatic anomalies. Much more than just a book on planting trees or reducing carbon footprints, 'The Tropic of Chaos' champions the cause of the many few who have relentlessly worked to place climate at the forefront of all international deliberations. A book that will give you many sleepless nights upon revealing the monstrous atrocities that have resulted due to the convenient negligence of those at the top of the global societal hierarchy. To quote a critic, " An argument can be made that it deals with the ONLY questions currently worth asking."

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## **Peter says**

Christian Parenti is a well respected journalist at nation Magazine (And other places) and this is a deeply reported account of violence, poverty and climate change in the middle latitudes of the planet, an area known as the global south. Parenti's thesis is straightforward: cold war militarism and neo-liberal economic reforms have made a number of stressed nations truly horrendous places to live, add in the reality of climate change and you have a recipe for chaos and disaster. There are some leaps of logic that aren't completely solid in the book and a touch of 'innocence' about possible solutions but it is a truly absorbing and disturbing read.

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## Gordon Hilgers says

This relatively brief book concentrates on Africa, South Asia and Latin America--each area touched by the tropic--to give us a sort of intellectual tour guide through areas experiencing the vector of climate change and social violence. Parenti explains how this "catastrophic convergence" occurs and, in the end, illustrates ways humankind is and can counter the effects of global warming and rising desertification.

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## Shannon (Giraffe Days) says

In *Tropic of Chaos*, American investigative journalist Christian Parenti looks into the "catastrophic convergence of poverty, violence and climate change" (p.5), studying the near history of regions between the Tropic of Capricorn and the Tropic of Cancer, "a belt of economically and politically battered post-colonial states girding the planet's mid-latitudes. In this band, around the tropics, climate change is beginning to hit hard. The Societies in this belt are also heavily dependent on agriculture and fishing, thus very vulnerable to shifts in weather patterns. This region was also on the front lines of the Cold War and of neoliberal economic restructuring. As a result, in this belt we find clustered most of the failed and semifailed sates of the developing world." [p.9] Parenti is connecting the dots to show not only how climate change is affecting these areas but also to predict what is coming, and how the Global North will most likely react, and what it *could* be doing instead.

Narrowing the focus onto several specific countries or areas - notably East Africa, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Brazil, Mexico and the United States -Parenti shows how climate change is affecting water, food production and the human populations, clearly delineating the link between environment and violence. But it's not just about climate change and people struggling to survive: it's also about the West's - or Global North's - reaction to violence and climate change (the two, in this book, are inextricably linked) which in turn is linked to our history of neo-liberal economic policy, the Cold War, and the new methods of counter-insurgency (COIN).

Sometimes these forces have worked together simultaneously; at other times they have been quite distinct. For example, Somalia was destroyed by Cold War military interventions interventions. It became a classic proxy battleground. Though it underwent some limited economic liberalization, its use as a pawn on the chessboard of global political struggle caused its collapse. The same holds true for Afghanistan, which was, and still is, a failed state. It never underwent structural adjustment but was a proxy battleground. On the other hand, Mexico, the north of which is now experiencing a profound violent crisis, was not a frontline state during the Cold War, but it was subject to radical economic liberalization.

Climate change now joins these crises, acting as an accelerant. The Pentagon calls it a "threat multiplier." All across the planet, extreme weather and water scarcity now inflame and escalate existing social conflicts. [pp.8-9]

He begins with the question: Who killed Ekaru Loruman? Loruman was cattle herder of the Turkana, a tribe who inhabit the plains area of what we call northern Kenya. A rival tribe who live in the arid hills routinely ride down with guns and steal cattle, the Turkana's livelihood, and Loruman was killed during one such raid. The question of who killed him isn't, of course, about pointing the finger at the man who shot him, but the

much bigger issue of why this is happening at all. From there, Parenti explores the region in more detail, tying it to U.S. politics and history - a similar pattern is used to delve into other countries in the "Tropic of Chaos".

This is by its very nature a hard book to summarise and an even harder one to review. All I can really do is give you my thoughts so you can consider whether this would be a good book for you to read, as well. By that I simply mean, how well written it is. I found that the level of Parenti's writing depends quite a bit on prior knowledge, and I didn't always have enough, thus it was at times a difficult read that moved a bit too fast for me. If I hadn't read books like Maude Barlow's *Blue Covenant*, about the global water crisis, and Naomi Klein's *The Shock Doctrine*, which is a phenomenal book about neo-liberal economics ("Chicago School" economics) and shock tactics implemented in developing countries, I would have really struggled here. His writing presumes upon a reader with a very sound understanding of history, economic policy and remote regions of the world. There are a few things I would have liked to help me get the most out of this book; I wouldn't have minded if it had been an extra 50 pages long to add more flesh to the areas, to explain the economics a bit more, and to have included more detailed maps than the ones used - maps are only of countries in an area, but the chapter discusses regions, valleys, border zones etc. and I had no real idea of where these were placed in relation to each other and other countries, and I'm the kind of person who likes to study a map so I can better visualise an area. It would have been particularly helpful in discussing Kashmir and Brazil.

But I did learn a lot from this book, as well. It certainly built upon prior knowledge and understanding, and I appreciated the simple breakdown of what the science of climate change really is: our fossil fuels have

boosted atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from around 280 parts per million (ppm) before the Industrial Revolution to 390 ppm today. Analyses of ancient ice cores show 390 ppm to be the highest atmospheric concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> during the last 10,000 years.

Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> functions like the glass in a greenhouse, allowing the sun's heat in but preventing much of it from radiating back out to space. We need atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> - without it, Earth would be an ice-cold, lifeless rock. However, over the last 150 years we have been loading the sky with far too much CO<sub>2</sub>, and the planet is heating up. [p.5]

We've all heard about the 2°C rise in temperatures spelling catastrophe, but it's hard to take a mere 2 degrees seriously when day by day, our temperatures rise and fall and vary dramatically. To put it into perspective, if the world *cooled* by 2 degrees centigrade, Earth would be in another ice age. So 2 degrees is actually very extreme for the planet. That comparison really helped me get a grasp of how important two seemingly small degrees are, though I still don't really understand - and it wasn't covered here - how we'll know when that happens. I mean, will it be drastic melting of all our glaciers and ice sheets, or will meteorologists and climate change scientists be able to say, "We've now reached the point where the Earth's temperature is hotter by 2 degrees." How do they measure the Earth's temperature? These are questions for a different book, I know, but no one ever mentions it so it bugs me.

The chapters on Afghanistan and the relationship between Pakistan and India were illuminating, and explains much of why the region is so unstable - and who gains from it and why. The chapter about India's drought, neo-liberal economic policies, and the cotton trade really jumped out at me, because it just seems so ... indicative.

Starting in 1991 the Indian government began a process of economic liberalization. Efficiency became the watchword; the state cut power subsidies to farmers. With that, running pumps for wells and irrigation became more expensive. To cope, farmers started taking loans from local banks or usurious moneylenders. The neoliberal withdrawal of developmentalist policies meant that local irrigation systems fell into dilapidation. [...] By the late 1990s, many farmers had run out of options - they were too far in arrears to borrow more, too broke to produce crops. For thousands, the only escape from this debt trap came in the form of suicide - often by swallowing pesticides. [p.143]

Another cause of debt is seed purchase. The zenith of this trap is Monsanto's genetically modified Bt cotton. [...] A government-owned company [...] provided financing and guidance, and yields did increase, essentially during the 1960s. These yields, however, were a function of greater capital investment. Farmers required more capital to buy fertilizer, pesticides, irrigation piping, and machinery. Thus, debts rose along with output.

Soon cotton became one of the main crops. Now the issue was no longer food scarcity but instead victory and profit on the international commodity markets. Very problematically, cotton also needs large amounts of water. Within a decade yields began to drop as the soil was stripped of its nutrients and poisoned by pesticides. The only solution for many farmers was to double down: borrow more and invest more, use more technology, take on more debt.

[...] With the rise of capital-intensive cotton farming in Telangana over the last thirty years, two strange contradictions have arisen. First, the primary cash crop, cotton, continues to decline in value; yet, farmers continue to plant more of it. Why do the farmers not shift to other crops? Second, while the region's overall growth in agricultural output has been robust ... the incomes and consumption of most farmers have declined precipitously, and this manifests as farmers' suicides and support for the Naxals [rebel group fighting the gov't]. The question now becomes: Why do farmers go into debt so as to plant a crop (cotton) for which the price is falling? [pp.142-6]

The answer is surprisingly simple, and all the more scary for it: the moneylenders, who for all intents and purposes own the farmers, demand that the farmers plant cotton because in a bad year, farmers can't *eat* cotton, they must sell it. The money from the sale goes to the moneylenders, which is why farmers have no capital. The farmers have no choice but to plant cotton, which also means they can't escape debt because cotton doesn't bring in enough money.

And on top of *that*, even the poorest, least educated peasant farmers in Afghanistan and India fully understand that the soil is being severely depleted of all nutrients by this kind of farming, yet they have no choice. The lesson is really that, while it seems like the things happening half a world away have really got nothing to do with us, sitting comfortably in our sturdy homes with our TVs and computers and flushing toilets, on our clean streets in our (comparably) well-managed cities, what the Indian cotton farmers and the Afghan opium and wheat farmers, as well as the Mexicans trying to cross the border into the U.S. and the Kenyan tribesmen guarding their cattle, it ALL has to do with us. "Globalisation" is really just a new word for colonialism, or so it seems to me, and if you're going to have "free trade" and "global markets" etc., you have to take some responsibility. But no one cares, as long as they make their extra several million dollars'

profit which they hoard in an off-shore account, or in the stock market or perhaps a hedge fund which doesn't actually *produce* anything.

Other illuminating parts of the book include the Mexico-U.S. border and what's really going on there - I read that chapter just days before watching one of those Republican presidential debates (the South Carolina one) and when they got talking about the border and rounding up the illegal aliens, having the extra knowledge and understanding really changed the way I heard their words - from general rabid frothing-at-the-mouth to the larger point Parenti is trying to make - with a dash of desperation, or so it sounds to me. This is the part about counter-insurgency (COIN) and violent adaptation to climate change. Countries like the U.S. are gearing up for climate change, but not in the way you might hope. Instead, they're preparing to create a fortress where the climate refugees (which is what the increased in Mexicans and South Americans at their border really are) are kept out and the true-blue Americans are safe within. They're preparing to simply man the gates, not mitigate climate change but simply make everyone else pay the price for their giant "gas-guzzling SUVs", as I hear people call them.

It's not all doom-and-gloom, but *Tropic of Chaos* isn't about cutting greenhouse gas emissions, it's about the effects of climate change on the poorest regions, on countries struggling to bring themselves out of debt and who are faced with increasingly unpredictable weather patterns as well as dominating neo-liberal economic policy - even when they've broken ties with the World Bank and IMF, the after-effects of such policies resound for decades. Tiny land-locked Bolivia was like a ray of sunshine in the book, proving that a good balance of sound economic policy, government regulation and forward-thinking mitigation can create a healthy, prosperous country that's doing its bit. Parenti's call for the United States government to lead the way in mitigation efforts seems to echo in an empty chamber as on the page, and will certainly be laughed at if a Republican becomes president, judging by how dismissive the candidates were of "global warming" and their rather bizarre notion that government should not, well, govern (this idea confuses me: what's the point of government, then? To simply collect taxes and spend it all on the military? That doesn't sound like a democracy at all).

If you're interested in the 20th-21st century history of countries like Somalia, India, Afghanistan, Brazil, Mexico, and how climate change, counter-insurgency and violence are connected, Parenti has done a thorough job in researching this correlation. He has been to all these areas, spoken with the locals including gang members, and has a firm understanding of global politics and economic theory. I would have liked for the latter to be better explained, because once you understand economic theory, not only does the world make more sense, but you can interpret what's happening and what our leaders etc. are actually saying and doing, in a more critical way. To that end, I recommend you read this after reading books like the ones I mentioned above, or perhaps even Parenti's earlier books, though I haven't read them so I don't know if they'd be good background for this or not.

Overall, *Tropic of Chaos* was a frightening study of convergence in the modern world, from which I learnt a lot in terms of small details and specific issues but was also left with more questions - and an undiminished thirst to learn more.

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## Mohamed El-Mahallawy says

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It starts with what we call Failed States. They didn't have to happen. The area between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn was originally a prosperous well run tribal, hereditary principalities, city states, or kingdoms. Then the Europeans and later Americans arrived. We brought "Civilization" but what we actually brought was plague, war, and death. After the West conjured these uncivilized peoples we exploited them. We raped the land for mineral wealth, depleted the land of it's soil fertility, killed off native species and imported invasive species that further degraded the land. All to benefit the Mother Country. But that mother country was the home of banks, import/export business, foundries, mills, etc. A mother country that could care less about it's own poor and even less about the uncivilized natives that it was exploiting. Then came the end of the Colonial Era.

When colonization came to an end and the Europeans/Americans left we left governments that were kleptocracy's. These kleptocracy's stole what little money was left in the newly founded nations treasury. The West took most of the treasuries with them as reparations for the land lost to the new local government by the western land holders. Often at well above the actual value of the property. Then in our Cold War fears we supplied loans to these corrupt governments to fight against Communist insurgencies. Loans that could only be repaid by turning the agricultural section and mineral section over to private ownership. Private owners headquartered in London, New York, Bonn, Paris, and Zurich. Essentially putting the newly freed nation back under colonial rule but, with local overseers call "President". Now with single crop big business agriculture: in India cotton, Guiney Bissau coco, Central America bananas, the local people are forced off the land and become day labors for the multinational agro companies. The local farms die off and the labor has to buy food from the few farmers that are still growing local crops: maize, peas, beans, sorghum etc. The small farm is under threat by the agro business multi national and the government, to feed it's people, has to get more loans from the west. Loans used to buy food, fertilizer, and farm equipment, all made by the G7. Under what was normal weather 20 to 30 years ago this would work for a long time but, with the weather through the tropics changing it won't.

Today the monsoons that 1/2 of India down the SE Asia depend on for water for the fields either come late, have less rain or, as in Bangladesh today, the rain comes all at once in a two to three day period causing flooding and loose of soil, crops, livestock and human life. Maybe those who die in the flooding are the lucky ones as they won't die in the famine that follows the flood? These will be the new "normal" conditions as the earth warms and goes past 2 degree's C. And were already at 1.6 to 1.7 depending on which particular data set one looks at. How much worse will the weather get at 2.5, 3, 3.5. or 4 deg C? As the weather gets worse these multiple millions of people living in the tropics WILL move. They can move North or South. South not much real estate so they will come North. How does the West Respond? DO we become an armed life boat? OK but eventually the millions/billions of climate refugees will swamp us. We simply can't make enough bullets to kill them as they cross the Rio Grande.

We have stop using so much carbon. We have to develop strategies for mitigating the worst effects of the coming climate volatility. We have to share these strategies with the States of the Tropics. By sharing we can keep these States stable longer and slow the mass migrations that are already starting. If we don't do these things then we are signing our children's death warrants. Many of our children and grand children WILL die protecting our unchanged life style and they will loose that fight as six to seven billion climate refugees try to find food.

Some will ask why does the U.S. and Europe have to change so much? The answer is it's out fault. We made the mess and we need to lead the way in cleaning it up. Today the U.S leads the world in per capita carbon emissions and Canada is right behind us. Both our countries use, per person, three times the carbon and emit three times the CO<sub>2</sub> as China. China leads the way in carbon emissions only because they have so many people and they have, over the past eight years, are, and plan to spend in the future three times more than the U.S and E.U. combined on green tech. They were the West's, particularly England's, victims during the colonization period yet they are leading in fixing the problems the West caused. China is building more infrastructure in Africa and SE Asia. China is making inroads into South America with loans for green

projects and water capture technologies. China is a major supporter of mixed crop agriculture in the Sahel region of Sub-Saharan Africa. A region that is home to Boko-Horam fanatics. Fanatics who are inspired by remnants of ideologies from the wars of liberation from European powers and are supplied with the weapons the West and the Soviets left behind after those wars.

Yea it's are fault these Tropic States are failures. Yes it's the West that is burning more carbon than any one else, per person. And it is because of these reasons that it is the West and the U.S in particular that must lead the way. Failure will only lead to our children fighting in unnecessary eco/resource wars that they will loose to the sheer weight of numbers that the Tropic States can muster.

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## Son Tung says

A few months back i said something to my friends without solid evidence: "People are dying everyday because of climate change". I did give them explanations, mainly in form of theories and rationalization. Now, after this book, i can get some real and pressing issues related to climate change and social disintegration.

There is no grand idea presented here: People fight over resources such as land and water, Climate change makes those resources less available, then there are conflicts, wars, i.e human drama.

What i love about this book is that the author presents analyses covered many geographical area, it is not just about how climate change affects everything but also all the political, economic history of these regions.

Before i knew about the separation of India and Pakistan, but not their Indus Waters Treaty which divided water used for irrigation, transport, power generation. Or cattle raiding which kills people, creates social dislocation because of drought in South Sudan, Kenya. Or Central Asia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Yemen, Eritrea, Djibouti political instability caused by military coup, colonial rule, Soviet-Cuba-US cold war interests and deeply connected to the fight for river and food security. Or what about South America: Mexico, Brazil....

I expected the author's opinion on Mekong Delta River in Southeast Asia (conflict between Cambodia, Laos, Viet Nam and China) to be presented, but it was not. However, i am ok. Time well spent on this book.

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## Gendawy says

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## Zeynep says

It helped me to know more about the present and future effects of climate change on African countries. Their livestock processes, the neighbour fights, the need for water, tribe wars etc.. and the relation with global climate change. However, the author sounds unnecessarily dramatic sometimes. Even though the issue itself carries a major significance and we need to be alarmed starting now, I did not like the tone of author sometimes.

overall, it worthed my time.

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