

Richard Tempest

The World After Covid: Prospects, Dangers,
Temptations

Lecture Six

Science, Celebrities, and the Future

Colin Powell RIP



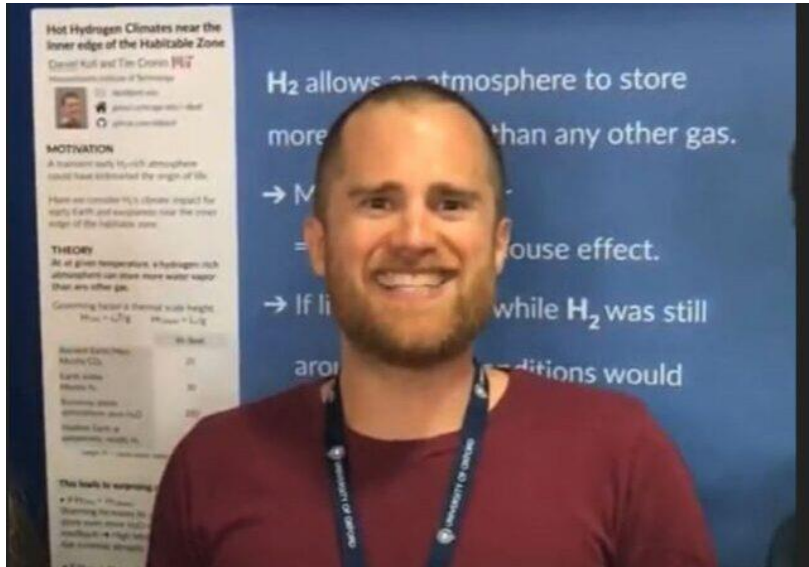
Aaron Burr, Winfield Scott Hancock, Robert Kennedy: the presidents that never were



News of the Week: Christchurch, New Zealand ends contract with that country's official wizard, Ian Brackenberry Channel. Paid \$16,000 a year, he was one of New Zealand's most popular public figures. Btw, the *US News and World Report* ranks New Zealand #7 on its Best Countries list. True, its previously stellar record of containing Covid is now gone, but this is a country that has many things going for it in the twenty-first century



The sort of tongue-in-cheek postmodern resistance to the march of modernity exemplified by wizard Channel is harmless. But *this* is not! In recent days we have seen a digital **mob**, a **government**, and a **corrupt official** attack the talented and accomplished in incidents that span the globe and different political systems. From left to right: Prof. Dorian Abbot, University of Chicago (cancelled following an online campaign), Russian poet Tatiana Voltskaya (branded a foreign agent by her country's ministry of justice), and Chinese space scientists Wang Jinnian and Wu Meirong (beaten up by communist bigwig out of thwarted private ambition)



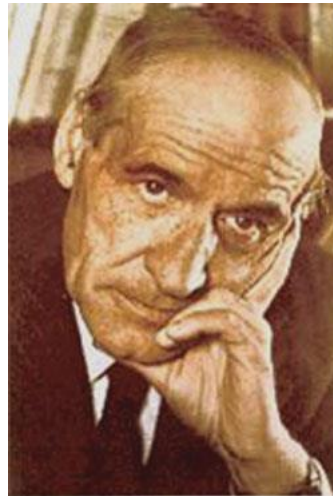
Zhang Tao, the bigwig in question, is (now) the former chairman of China Aerospace Investment Holdings. He longed to be elected to the International Academy of Aeronautics, despite lacking the necessary credentials



Air rage: here to stay? The United States Travel Safety Administration has increased penalties for passengers who refuse to wear a mask to \$500-\$1000 for first offenders and \$1000-\$3000 for second offenders. However, penalties for violence on, or disruption of, a flight can result in fines of tens of thousands of dollars, a prison sentence, as well as inclusion on the federal no-fly list



José Ortega-y-Gasset classic study, *The Revolt of the Masses* (1929), addressed the twin threat to modern society presented by left- and right-wing totalitarians who recruit *el hombre masa*, or mass-man, to their cause. Note that Ortega's analysis was not classist: mass-man is not marginalized or persecuted or poor. Rather, he is a self-satisfied figure who believes that his way is the only way, and who is vulnerable to perceived or actual threats



Elon Musk: entrepreneur, engineer, celebrity, centibillionaire



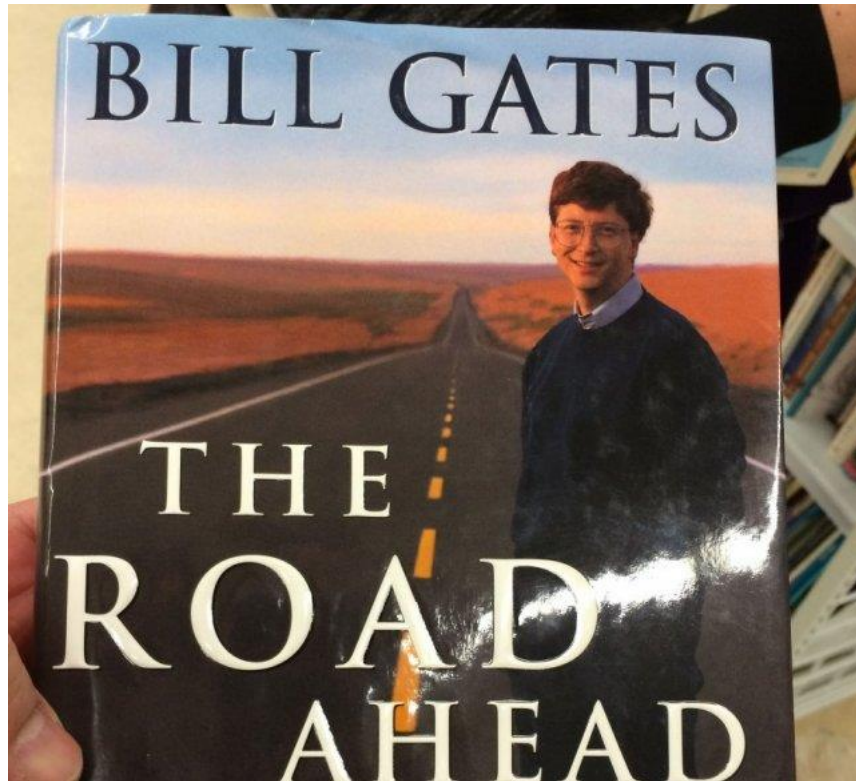
Thomas Edison was the first globally famous inventor and technology entrepreneur. His New Jersey lab, which became a template for the industrial research facilities of the twentieth- and twenty-first century, is now a National Historical Park



Operating at the intersection of big business, technological innovation, pop, and PR, Musk is both a visionary and a cultural mirror. Here he is shown with his partner, the post-punk musician Grimes, by whom he had a son (his seventh child), X Æ A-Xii (sic!), born in 2020



Bill Gates was the computer guru of the 1990s. Since then he has left Microsoft and branched out into new intellectual and social activism realms



BILL GATES
HOW TO
AVOID A
CLIMATE
DISASTER

**THE SOLUTIONS WE HAVE AND THE
BREAKTHROUGHS WE NEED**

The Tham Luang cave rescue and scandal



Elon Musk @elonmusk · 24m

Never saw this British expat guy who lives in Thailand (sus) at any point when we were in the caves. Only people in sight were the Thai navy/army guys, who were great. Thai navy seals escorted us in — total opposite of wanting us to leave.

20 replies · 10 retweets · 134 likes · 20 retweets

Elon Musk @elonmusk

Replying to @elonmusk @zeynep

Water level was actually very low & still (not flowing) — you could literally have swum to Cave 5 with no gear, which is obv how the kids got in. If not true, then I challenge this dude to show final rescue video. Huge credit to pump & generator team. Unsung heroes here.

7:04 AM - 15 Jul 2018

10 Retweets 134 Likes

20 replies · 10 retweets · 134 likes · 20 retweets

Elon Musk @elonmusk · 10m

Replying to @elonmusk @zeynep

You know what, don't bother showing the video. We will make one of the mini-sub/pod going all the way to Cave 5 no problemo. Sorry pedo guy, you really did ask for it.

34 replies · 10 retweets · 83 likes · 34 retweets

A Tesla car in near-earth orbit



Tesla showrooms, whose appearance recalls Apple's branded stores, are nothing like a traditional dealership. They are found in malls and major shopping streets and serve as display and advertising spaces for the company's products, which can only be bought online



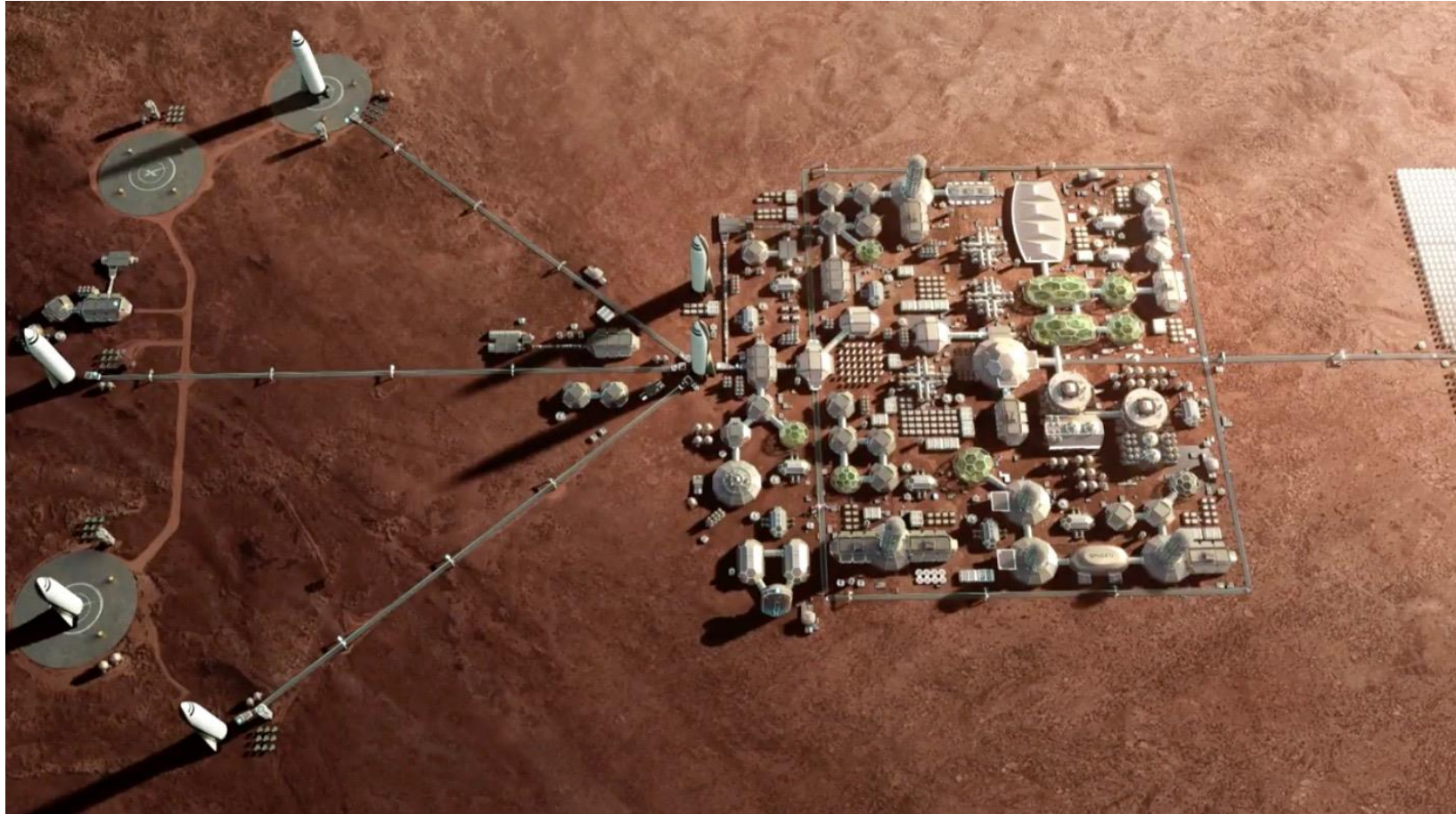
Volvo, owned by Chinese company Geely, plans to make 1.2M cars a year by 2025 and to go all electric by 2030. It leads other auto manufacturers (though not Tesla) in moving away from the franchised dealership model in favor of subscriptions or direct sales at fixed prices



Prototype of Elon Musk's Starship during a flight test at Boca Chica, Texas, in January 2021



Musk's Mars colony

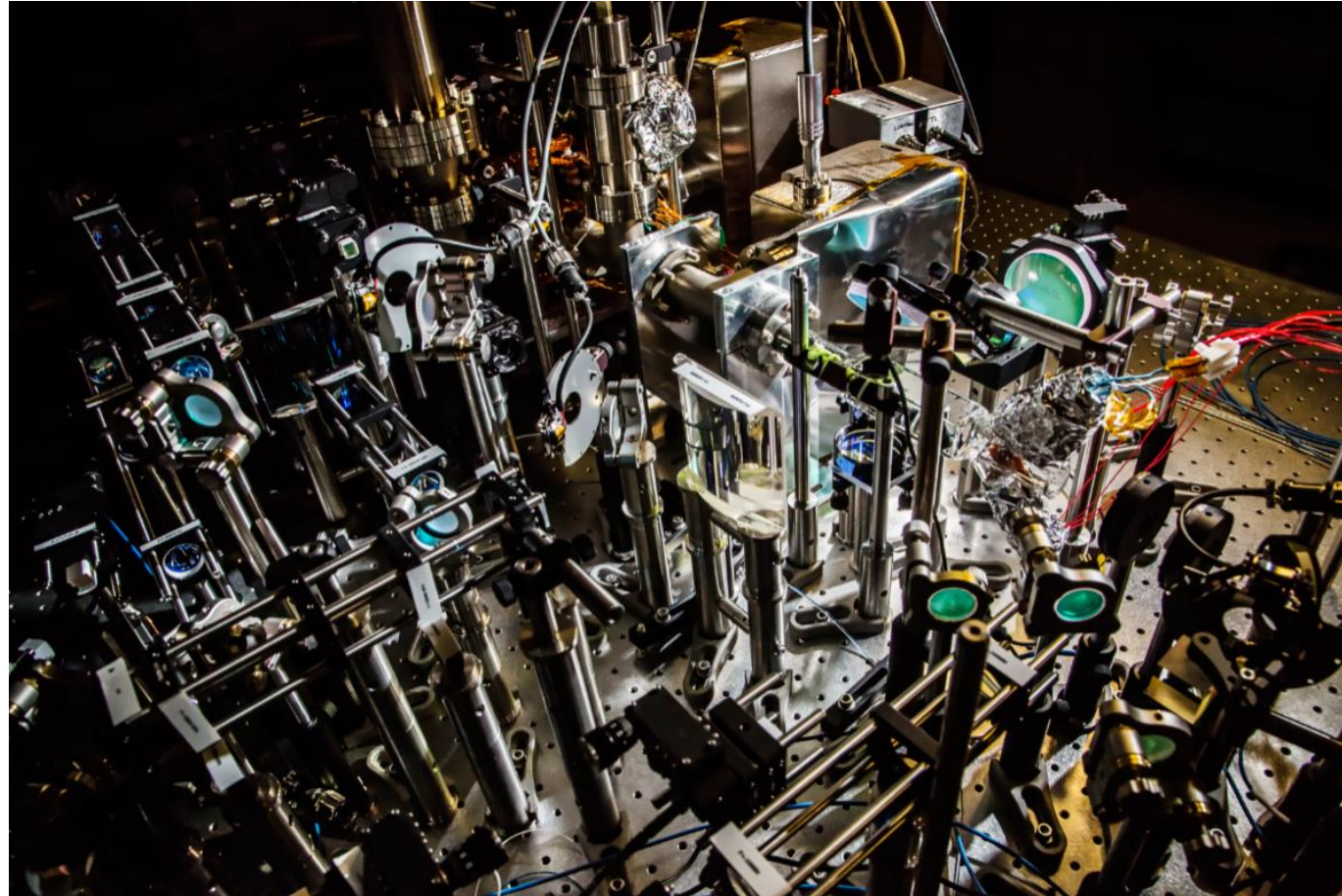


The Boring Company



The recently created Illinois Quantum Information Science and Technology Center (IQIIS) is part of the NFS- and corporate-supported Chicago Quantum Exchange. The State of Illinois has its problems, but this is one of the truly bright spots!

Quantum computers perform calculations employing the principles of quantum mechanics, i.e., the probability of a subatomic object's state before it is measured



Globalization may have taken a hit, but it is here to stay

- Retrenchment from globalization, including repatriation of manufacturing and tariffs
- Global productivity growth
- World-wide automation of manufacturing and services, including education
- Global trade in services rises relative to the trade in goods
- Global value chains become more knowledge-intensive; strengthening of the global information economy
- Market value of creativity and expertise increases, which is reflected in rich-world immigration policy
- Illegal wealth harder to conceal internationally

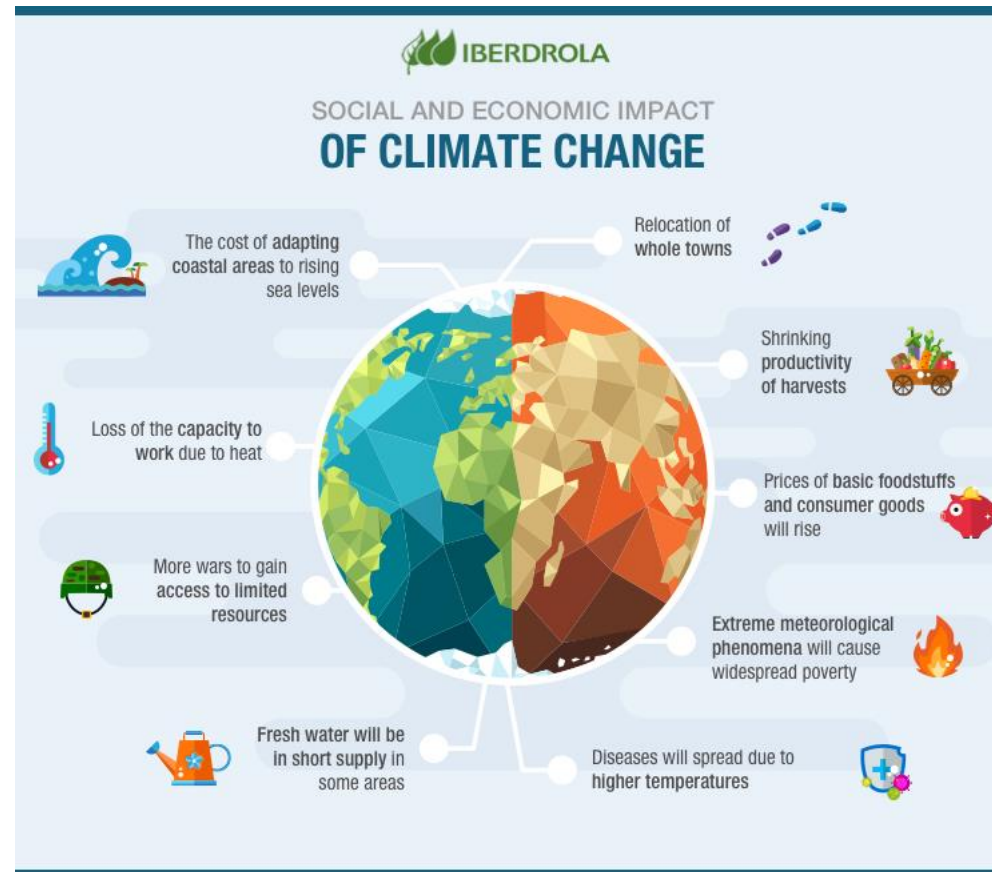
The Chinese model of melding online retail with branded apps and social platforms, pioneered by Alibaba and Tencent, will expand. This is happening in the case of fast-fashion company Shein, founded in 2008, which as of May 2021 boasted the most downloaded shopping app in America. By next year, Shein is expected to overtake Zara in terms of total revenue. On right: company founder and CEO Xu (Chris) Yangtian



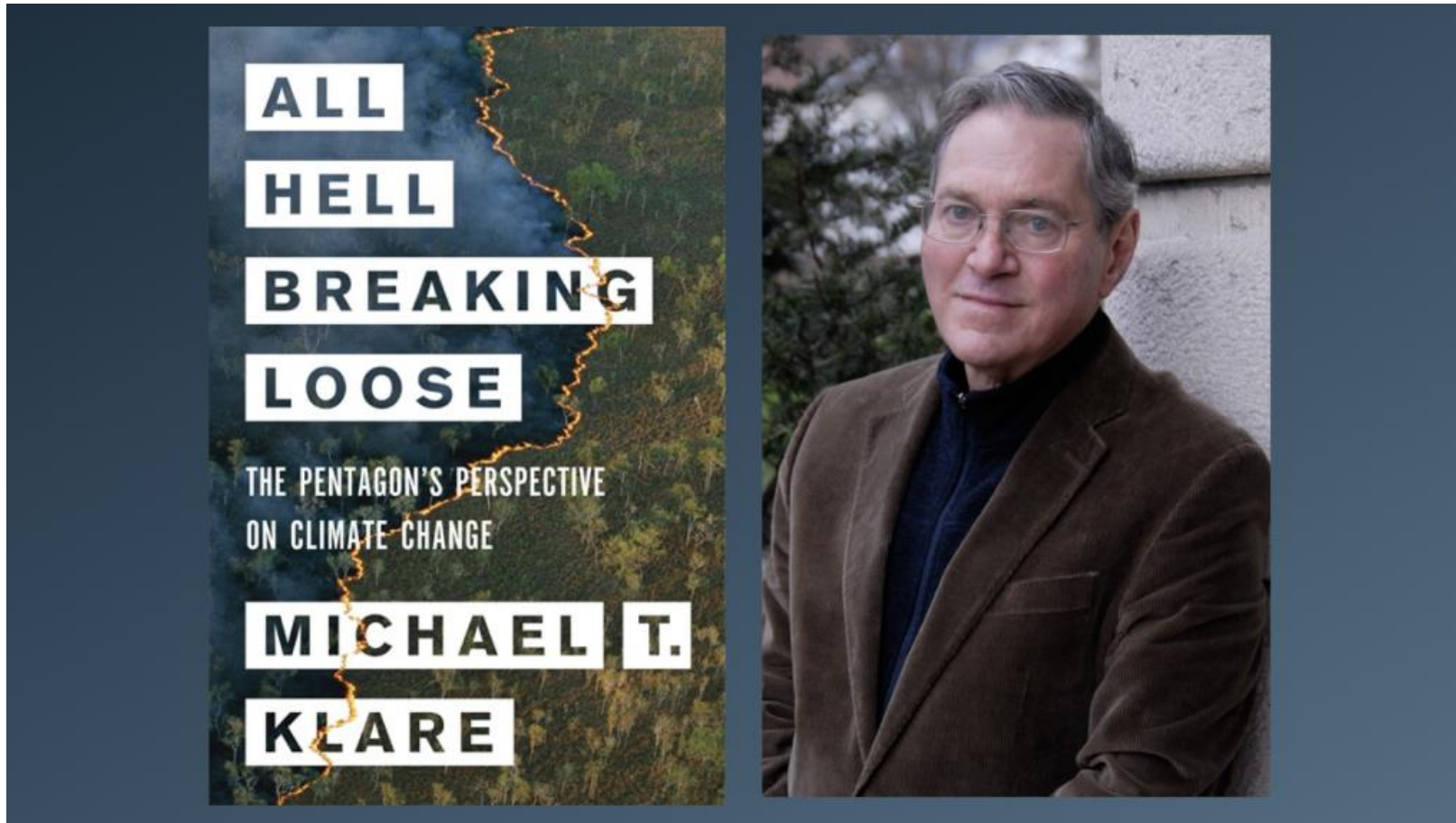
Greening companies, sustainable businesses, and the DJSI



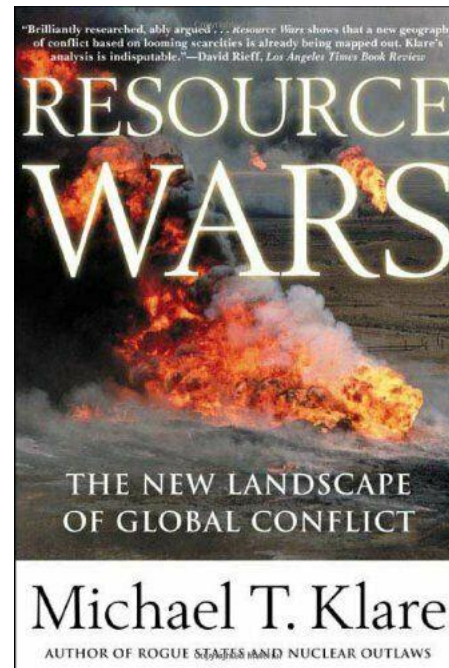
Global climate change is the key medium- and long-term challenge facing humankind



Michael T. Klare, one of the world's most forward-looking security specialists, is an authority on the geopolitical ramifications of environmental change



...and is the author of this 2001 study



Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam, construction on which began in 2011



Environmental degradation and resource scarcity in underdeveloped areas of the world will lead to increasing conflict



The Economist

Climate change will inspire innovation

- more efficient electric batteries
- modular floating wind arrays
- crystalline polysilicon solar panels or lens- and filter-enhanced ones: since 2010, the cost of solar energy has fallen by 90%, but there is much room for further improvement
- clean hydrogen technology
- Carbon-negative manufacturing and technology

Carbon-negative technologies include biomass, though there are limitations. For instance, in order to produce 10GW a year by 2050 out of biological material, we would need the same area as all the forests in Russia. And what about the production of food? Ocean biomass, e.g., seaweed, which is highly suitable as fuel, may be the solution



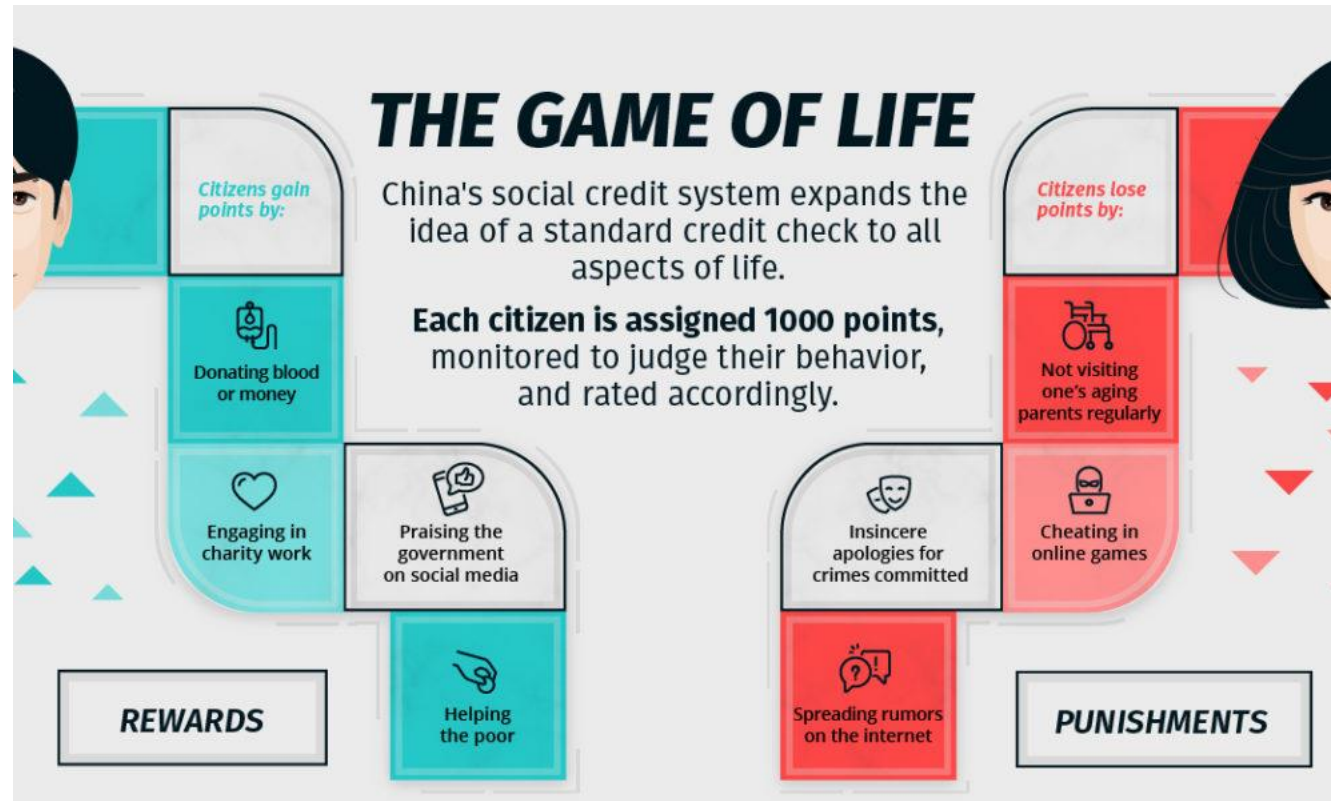
Yet human beings are short-time thinkers and feelers...



In the West, demands for greater societal control over social media, with emphasis on suppressing disinformation and protecting privacy will grow. The optimistic view is that legislative and regulatory reform and the rise of new online platforms and practices will put a lid on the entropy of online discourse. The pessimistic view is that we are doomed to wallow in a Zuckerbergian sea of ignorance, hate, and bile



From credit score to social credit



Social and cultural change will continue to happen and will be variously empowering, discombobulating, and traumatic



Looming over the horizon...

