

Let's Schmooze

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Global Trends to Watch

In our quest to bring about a relative utopia here on our planet Earth, it would behoove us to keep a close eye on important things that are happening everywhere ~ global trends, to be exact.

We want to recognize and appreciate good global trends, because good global trends indicate that we are progressing in the right direction.

And, we want to be alert to and monitor bad global trends, because bad global trends indicate that we are headed in the wrong direction.

When we get to a point where the good global trends outweigh the bad global trends, we will have cause for celebration. At that point, we will be able to say to ourselves that we are making meaningful progress toward bringing about a relative utopia here on our planet Earth.

Let's review for a moment this concept termed *relative* utopia. Obviously, we don't mean an absolutely perfect utopia ~ if we did, we wouldn't be using the modifier *relative*. What we mean by the statement "bringing about a *relative* utopia here on our planet Earth" is to bring about a planetary situation that is appreciably more favorable for human life than the situation we presently have.

It's a simple fact that excellent arguments are being made that the present situation here on our planet Earth could end up being terminal for humanity. The Doomsday Clock is now sitting at only two minutes until the absolute blackness of midnight. There are so many reasons for this. We'll go over a number of them in a minute.

The point is, we need to obtain a relative utopia rather quickly in order to avoid possible extinction. We know that the extinction of a species is not a difficult thing to bring about. In the last few centuries humans have inadvertently been the cause of the extinction of many other species on Earth. Life here on Earth is a delicate thing, and subject to delicate balances. This delicate sensitivity applies to all species ~ including us, homo-sapiens.

To ensure that we remain honest in our evaluation of ongoing global trends, we need to step outside of our own fish bowl, so to speak. We'll do this by pretending that we are aliens from another galaxy who have been sent to evaluate the conditions on the planet that the locals call Earth. By pretending so, we will render dormant any emotional attachment that we may have toward the species homo-sapiens. This is where the evaluative honesty comes in ~ via emotional detachment.

We'll surmise that evaluating aliens would use a layered framework of analysis, as an onion is layered. In evaluating human life on Earth, the first and foremost consideration will be the outer layer of analysis ~ the planetary environment. The first thing aliens would want to evaluate is the condition of the physical environment for human existence.

The second, or middle, layer of analysis will be the quality of the species itself. Are humans designed and structured for long-term existence in a supportive physical environment?

The third, or innermost, layer of analysis will be the behavior of humans ~ ergo, their culture. If the physical environment is supportive of human life, and if homo-sapiens are designed and structured for long-term existence within that physical environment, do humans actually develop a culture, or behaviors, that take advantage of their situation to build a civilization that can endure for endless ages?

Evaluating global trends from an alien viewpoint will not only enable us to be fairly honest with our evaluations, but should lead us to conclusions that are grounded into actual realities. These conclusions, divorced from obscuring emotional attachments, may possibly suggest ways to improve the human condition.

Let's start with the outermost layer, the environment. The question ~ is the physical environment on the planet conducive to human life? Obviously it is; there are billions of humans down there now.

That being said, do global trends indicate that this conduciveness will remain so, or do global trends indicate that the physical environment is changing for better or worse ~ for humans specifically?

We'll tag our global trends the color **green** if the trend is upbeat, and **red** if the trend is downbeat.

The Physical Environment - Earth

Fish Stocks ~ for all practical purposes, the oceans' fisheries are depleted and pretty much exhausted. Even large mammalian species, such as orcas, are at risk. To the degree that the health of the dry lands is ultimately linked to the health of the vastly larger, wet oceans, humanity's survivability may be at risk. Earth's oceans are dying, chocked with plastics and toxic runoffs, and increasingly depleted of life-giving oxygen.

Global Warming ~ this is a difficult one. Earth seems to naturally cycle between warm and cold periods. It could be that global warming may change climatic givens for humans, but not necessarily be an extinction event. That remains to be seen, and probably depends on the true intelligence and ongoing adaptability of humans. The more dangerous aspect of global warming is not the warming per se, but the fact that global warming will probably unlock massive toxins that have been locked in permafrost for thousands of years. If climate melting exposes these toxins to the waters and atmosphere, it could lead to a massive poisoning of human habitats.

Ozone layers ~ massive holes have opened in the ozone layer at both the north and south poles ~ the Arctic and the Antarctic. The ozone layer protects biological life on the planet from the more lethal aspects of the Sun's radiation. Holes in the ozone layer threaten all life on Earth. Humanity has made some progress in shrinking the ozone holes, but lately that progress seems to be reversing.

Pestilence ~ it would appear that pathogens (viruses, bacteria, fungi) are developing a resistance to current human countermeasures such as antibodies and vaccinations, and are coming back in renewed strength. Planet-wide, lethal diseases are becoming increasingly difficult to treat. Large-scale, deadly plagues may be coming back to haunt humanity.

Without renewed antibacterial and viral controls, most of the healthful benefits of humanity's modern medicine will be lost.

Plasticization ~ the billions of pieces of plastics being discarded into the oceans are killing coral reefs and spreading disease throughout the sea basins. Soon, there will be more discarded plastic in the oceans than organic life. That will turn the oceans into killing zones, even for land-based life, ever dependent on the oceans for both oxygen and food.

Toxicity ~ it would appear that human industrialization has introduced a host of manmade poisons into the environment. These manmade poisons can destroy humanity completely, not only through destruction of the human genetic code, but also through essential sterilization. Currently, millions of humans are dying from polluted air every year.

Water ~ absolutely necessary to human life, fresh potable water is becoming scarce. Existing water supplies, both fresh and salt, are increasingly becoming contaminated with pathogens and toxins. Humans cannot live without clean water. Currently, about four billion humans suffer from the threat of insufficient water supplies. This puts at risk about two-thirds of the global human population.

The Species - Homo Sapiens

Charity ~ humans are capable of great charity of spirit toward themselves and other life forms. If this human characteristic can overwhelm other negative human characteristics, then the possibility of long-term survival may become meaningful.

Demographics ~ the population is spiraling out of control. The population count is more than triple what the planet can comfortably carry. Unchecked, excessive population can lead to both terminal disease and nasty intra-species violence.

Divisiveness ~ humans tend to separate themselves into kinship groups, cliques, cults, and other "us versus them" factions. This often engenders prejudice, discrimination, ethnocentricity, and racism. This human tendency toward divisiveness often thwarts potential feelings of unity and charity, in turn paving the way to violent intra-species conflict.

Intelligence ~ overall, human intelligence seems to be declining, probably caused by the increasing man-made toxicity of the physical environment, together with the prevalent use of manmade drugs. If true, this trend would have a negative affect on humanity's ability to quickly adapt to changing environmental givens.

Psychology ~ members of this species have a tendency of saying one thing and actually doing the opposite. This could be a detrimental species characteristic if this tendency becomes an obstacle to psychological commitment manifesting itself in physical action.

Human Culture

Communication ~ members of this species tend to have the habit of controlling other members by stifling both individual thought and the expression of individual thought. This could be a detrimental species characteristic if the stifling of thought inadvertently stifles ideas that can help the species move forward.

Drugs ~ humans seem to have a tendency to introduce manmade drugs into their bodies. This has a deleterious effect both on the individual human using the drugs, and on the physical environment via drug refuse.

Economy ~ most of the economic wealth is concentrated in a very few hands. This could be a neutral concern except for the fact that the very wealthy don't seem to be very interested in moving humanity forward; instead, they seem to be more interested in garnering even more economic wealth unto themselves. In addition, human economies are essentially based on unbridled consumption, resulting in resource depletion and toxic environmental pollution. This species does not seem able to construct a sustainable economy that can endure over long spans of time without laying waste to essential resources.

Warfare ~ this species has developed nuclear weaponry, and now has the ability to completely destroy itself. Given their tendency to solve problems amongst themselves with the use of physical violence, it is entirely conceivable that they could trigger their own nuclear Armageddon without any outside help.

Tentative Conclusion

The species homo-sapiens have a lot to do if they want to ensure their long-term survival. Many of the **reds** need to morph into **greens**. Given the nature of the threats to humanity's future existence, time itself may be a constraint.

If humans actually do end up exterminating themselves, the planet may become ripe for the introduction of a different humanoid species ~ a new species that doesn't have self-defeating tendencies, and that can build a lasting civilization.

~ the Alien report ~

~ 'til we meet again ~