

# “We Are on the Edge of an Abyss—And Moving in the Wrong Direction.” UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres

By [Carla Stea](#)

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*At the opening of the 76 session of the United Nations General Assembly, 20 September, 2021, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres delivered a forceful and terrifying speech, which could only lead to the conclusion that, short of a Herculean global effort to reverse course, planet earth and the human species are on the verge of extinction. In the words of the Secretary-General,*

“I am here to sound the alarm. The world must wake up. We are on the edge of an abyss—and moving in the wrong direction. Our world has never been more threatened or more divided. We face the greatest cascade of crises in our lifetimes... A surplus in some countries. Empty shelves in others. This is a moral indictment of the state of our world.

It is an obscenity....We see the warning signs in every continent and region. Scorching temperatures. Shocking biodiversity loss. Polluted air, water and natural spaces. And climate-related disasters at every turn. We need a 45 per cent cut in emissions by 2030. Yet a recent UN report made clear that with present national climate commitments, emissions will go UP by 16 percent by 2030. That would condemn us to a hellscape of temperature rises of at least 2.7 degrees above pre-industrial levels. When people see promises of progress denied by the realities of their harsh daily lives...

When they see their fundamental rights and freedoms curtailed...when they see petty—as well as grand—corruption around them...WHEN THEY SEE BILLIONAIRES JOYRIDING TO SPACE WHILE MILLIONS GO HUNGRY ON EARTH... It will be impossible to address dramatic economic and development challenges while the world’s two largest economies are completely at odds with each other...

We are also seeing an explosion in seizures of power by force. Military coups are back....I fear our world is creeping towards two different sets of economic, trade,

financial, and technology rules, two divergent approaches in the development of artificial intelligence—and ultimately two different military and geo-political strategies. This is a recipe for trouble. It would be far less predictable and far more dangerous than the Cold War.”

It is almost impossible to see how the Secretary-General follows the above succinct – and horrifyingly realistic description of imminent global catastrophe with his assertion that he still has hope. He asserts: “Third, we must bridge the gap between rich and poor, within and among countries.” That should have been his first priority.

He adds: “I call on countries to reform their tax systems and finally end tax evasion, money laundering and illicit financial flows.” Here, Guterres might have been more specific, citing recent Pro Publica documents that the multi-billionaires in the United States connive methods of paying zero income taxes to the federal government, while the poor majority pay more than a third of their meagre incomes in federal taxes which do not benefit them.

The Secretary-General’s opening address to the General Assembly is overwhelming in the crises he denounces, yet it is difficult to find any reason for hope, absent the political will that has become a scourge of the world since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The looming new cold war could erupt in World War III between the United States and China, and perhaps the only possible restraint upon Western militarism is the new friendship between Russia and China which, together, are a more formidable opponent than either country would be separately.

Yet it is difficult to know whether Armageddon will be averted. During his September 25 press conference, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was asked his opinion of President Biden’s assertion that the days of military invasion are over. Lavrov replied, irrefutably, that the United States has newer effective methods of imposing its will upon other countries, and overthrowing governments which are independent, replacing them with servile pawns: the new methods of “regime change” are the “color revolutions” such as the one in Ukraine which transformed a fraternal country into a nazi-oriented, Western-controlled enemy.

Unquestionably, the techniques of “color revolutions” have become a pestilence more deadly than the much feared-celebrated Covid-19 pandemic.

Indeed, new forms of censorship, perhaps more subtle, and some tacitly endorsed by the United Nations, slandering as “misinformation” any statement which questions the current global agenda which is, in reality, leading to the “abyss,” are perhaps among the most pernicious and deadly forces driving humanity in “the wrong direction.” Is the United Nations becoming part of the solution – or part of the problem?

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