

The Doom Loop of the Polycrisis Leads to Fascism

The masses cry out for immediate solutions to long-term problems, inviting despots to lead them.

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As our planet [careens toward ecological collapse](#), the interplay between climate change and geopolitical instability is hurtling us into an era defined by [chaos, suffering, and authoritarian rule](#). The grim reality is this: the worsening impacts of climate change will erode social, economic, and environmental stability, creating fertile ground for strongmen to seize power under the guise of offering salvation. These leaders, hailed as the cure for society's ills, will instead implement policies that deepen the climate crisis, entrench inequality, and [perpetuate a self-reinforcing doom loop](#).

This is not a speculative scenario — it is a trajectory [we are already on](#). [Humanity's collective inaction](#), coupled with our [desperation for immediate solutions](#), is paving the way for a dystopian future. Here's why.

Climate Change is the Catalyst for Collapse

The devastating effects of climate change are no longer a distant threat; they are a present and worsening reality. Record-breaking heatwaves, [catastrophic floods](#), and [prolonged droughts](#) are displacing millions, devastating agriculture, and causing widespread economic instability. These events are not distributed equally. They disproportionately affect poorer countries and marginalized populations, whose suffering spills across borders in the form of refugee crises and resource conflicts.

Take, for example, the migration waves stemming from the Middle East and Africa. Climate-induced [crop failures](#) and [water shortages](#) are destabilizing already fragile nations, pushing desperate populations to flee toward wealthier regions. These migrations, in turn, exacerbate political tensions in host countries, fueling xenophobia and social division.

In wealthy nations, like the one your family calls home, these effects are creeping closer. [Rising insurance premiums](#), [supply chain disruptions](#), and [extreme weather events](#) are eroding financial security and creating a pervasive sense of anxiety. This destabilization primes the populace for reactionary politics. And reactionary politics, as history teaches us, are a breeding ground for authoritarianism.

The Cry for a “Strong Leader”

[Amid crises, people yearn for order](#). They want decisive action, even if it comes at the expense of democracy, freedom, or long-term solutions. Enter the “strong leader,” a figure who promises to restore stability through swift, unilateral action. These leaders, often charismatic and unburdened by democratic constraints, rise to power by exploiting fear and division.

But strongmen do not emerge from thin air. [They are called forth](#) by the people themselves — particularly the economically and educationally disenfranchised. For the poor, who bear the brunt of climate disasters and economic volatility, the promises of strongmen are intoxicating. These leaders often cast blame on convenient scapegoats — migrants, minorities, or foreign adversaries — channeling collective frustration into support for authoritarian policies.

For educated, middle-class families, the appeal of such figures may seem alien. After all, you value democracy, rational policy, and the rule of law. But even in your demographic, a breaking point exists. When the realities of climate change — whether in the form of soaring utility costs, food shortages, or the displacement of millions — begin to affect your children's futures, the allure of quick fixes and “law and order” rhetoric becomes harder to resist.

The Arsonist Masquerading as Firefighter

The strongmen who rise to power in this context are, without exception, ill-equipped to address the root causes of the crises they exploit. Their solutions are myopic at best and deliberately destructive at worst.

Fossil Fuel Dependency

In the name of economic growth, authoritarian regimes often double down on fossil fuel extraction, deforestation, and resource-intensive industrialization. These measures may temporarily buoy economies or lower energy prices, but they accelerate environmental collapse. Leaders like Jair Bolsonaro, who gutted environmental protections in the Amazon, or Donald Trump, who rolled back climate regulations in the U.S., exemplify this trend.

Militarization and Conflict

[Strongmen thrive on conflict](#). Whether by stoking international rivalries or clamping down on dissent at home, authoritarian leaders create and sustain instability as a means of consolidating power. Climate change, with its potential to spark resource wars and migration crises, provides a convenient backdrop for such machinations. Instead of investing in renewable energy or climate adaptation, these leaders divert resources into military buildup and border fortifications.

Economic Inequality

While authoritarian rhetoric often appeals to the “common man,” their policies invariably entrench inequality. Crony capitalism, corruption, and the suppression of labor movements ensure that wealth remains concentrated in the hands of elites. Meanwhile, the poorest citizens — the same people who cried out for strong leadership — are left to suffer the worst impacts of climate change and economic collapse.

The Vicious Cycle Deepens

This is the essence of the [doom loop](#): climate change exacerbates geopolitical instability, which fosters authoritarianism, which in turn accelerates climate change. It is a cycle that feeds on itself, dragging humanity further into chaos with each rotation.

- **Climate-driven migration** destabilizes regions, creating political vacuums that strongmen exploit.
- **Authoritarian leaders** implement environmentally destructive policies, worsening climate impacts.
- **Worsened climate impacts** lead to greater instability and desperation, paving the way for the next authoritarian surge.

Every turn of this loop tightens the noose around our collective future.

The Futility of Proposed Solutions

Proponents of global cooperation, green technologies, or democratic resilience argue that we can break this cycle. But these solutions, while well-intentioned, are laughably inadequate in the face of our current trajectory.

- **Global Cooperation?** Toothless international agreements like the Paris Accord are routinely ignored or undermined by key players. Even when commitments are made, they are too little, too late.
- **Technological Innovation?** Betting on unproven technologies to reverse climate change or adapt to its impacts is an act of desperation, not strategy. Carbon capture, geoengineering, and renewable energy transitions require decades we no longer have.
- **Democratic Resilience?** In theory, democracy offers the best chance of addressing climate change equitably. In practice, democracies are paralyzed by short-termism, partisanship, and corporate influence. Authoritarianism rises precisely because democracy fails to deliver rapid, tangible results.

The harsh truth is this: humanity has neither the collective will nor the governance structures to avert the impending collapse. Attempts to break the doom loop are like rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic.

A Grim Forecast

For a moment, step outside your role as a concerned parent or professional. Imagine the world [your children will inherit](#). Climate-induced disasters will become the norm, not the exception. Economic instability will [erode the prosperity](#) you've worked so hard to secure. And the freedoms you cherish — freedom of speech, freedom to dissent, freedom to vote — will increasingly fall victim to the creeping tide of authoritarianism.

Strongmen will not protect your family; they will exploit your fears to serve their own ends. Yet resisting them will become increasingly difficult as the chaos of climate change tightens its grip on society.

The question is not whether this doom loop will affect you, but when. Will it be the next hurricane that shatters your confidence in democratic governance? The next wave of climate refugees that turns your community into a political battleground? Or the next authoritarian leader who promises to restore "order" at the cost of everything else?

The Takeaway — Fascism is the Final Spiral

The doom loop of climate change and geopolitical instability is not a distant threat; it is here, it is now, and it is accelerating. Humanity's collective failure to address climate change has created conditions ripe for the rise of authoritarianism. And once in power, these strongmen will only deepen the crisis, locking us into a cycle of destruction from which there may be no escape.

This is the legacy we are leaving to our children: a world where desperation trumps reason, where tyranny trumps freedom, and where humanity's brief experiment with civilization ends not with a bang, but with a long, drawn-out whimper.

As the saying goes, those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it. But in the case of climate change and authoritarianism, repeating history is the least of our concerns. We are making a new history — one defined by suffering, exploitation, and collapse. And unless something changes (though let's face it, it won't), that history will have no one left to read it.