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Starvation Imagery as Humanitarian Trump Card?

Counterproductive emotional blackmail engendering worldwide indifference

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Introduction

The increasing impact of winter in the Northern Hemisphere has obvious consequences for the hundreds of thousands in refugee camps lacking many facilities, or having none at all. Diffusion of images of those starving in camps in freezing temperatures -- subject to embargos on delivery of foodstuffs -- increases recognition of the dimensions of the humanitarian crisis and the urgency of a solution ([Heartbreaking video shows starving Syrian children as true horror of war is unveiled](#), *Mirror*, 7 January 2016; [Madaya, besieged Syrian town, plagued by starvation as winter takes hold](#), *CBCNews*, 7 January 2016; [Families Facing Starvation and Famine in Madaya, Syria](#), *Revolution News*, 6 January 2016).

International institutions and agencies, who derive their income from associating themselves with those suffering, are clearly most articulate in the urgency of their appeals. Framed as a humanitarian emergency, the unquestionable need to act now is simply stated. Considered reflection is an irresponsible, luxurious indulgence when people are dying. The focus is on the short-term. Any case for long-term reflection can be brushed aside as a matter for the future -- after the current challenge has been addressed. The message is: ***This is urgent. People are dying. Nothing else matters.*** Or, more simply: ***Don't think; Just give.***

Such urgency can be seen as a "trump card", outranking all other considerations, through which starving children are used as a "humanitarian shield" obscuring other agendas, whether appropriate or dubious. **Starvation is effectively exploited as a question blocker and a learning inhibitor.**

This can be seen as a tactic of humanitarian hypocrisy. Such an argument is offensive, but necessarily so -- for so are the images of the starving children, when no thought whatsoever is given to how their situation arose, nor to why it will continue to be repeated in the future. Images of starvation become a propaganda tool ([Starvation as a tool of war in Syria](#), *Al Jazeera*, 3 Jan 2016).

There is however another consequence to dissemination of such images. People worldwide are increasingly aware of the probability of token response to humanitarian appeals. The numbers suffering from starvation, lack of shelter, and related illnesses continue to increase. Those making appeals place themselves on the moral high ground in doing so. Those who fail to respond are made to feel increasingly guilty. Those responsible for the situation evade all attention.

The defensive reaction by those to whom appeals are made in response to repeated crises of that kind is however poorly recognized. The response is one of increasing indifference, as may be variously recognized ([Indifference to the Suffering of Others: occupying the moral and ethical high ground through doublespeak](#), 2013). The issue is complicated by perceived risk of undue implication, as clarified in a country with no lack of suffering, and with some of the world's most dangerous roads. Victims are all too often left to fend for themselves ([If no-one helps you after a car crash in India, this is why](#), *BBC News*, 7 June 2016).

Repeated exposure to images of severe suffering engenders **psychic numbing** (Paul Slovic, *Psychic Numbing and Genocide*, *American Psychological Associations*, November 2007; David Hicks and Andy Bord, *Learning about Global Issues: why most educators only make things worse*, *Environmental Education Research*, 2001). **Suffering somewhere is becoming the new norm with which all must deal on a daily basis.** However suffering elsewhere can be more readily framed as an unacceptable evil for which others are responsible. As with universal condemnation of apartheid, however, it is especially convenient that it be a focus for attention on another continent -- displacing attention from the challenge of discrimination and suffering in the immediate environment.

The increasing number of beggars in the streets of developed countries emphasizes the dilemmas, as with the arrival of refugees migrating from afar ([Responding to begging: compassion, emotional blackmail and risk of being duped?](#), 2015). Why should starvation imagery from elsewhere evoke a response when daily exposure to local suffering is a matter of habitual indifference, however much it

may be conscientiously deplored?

The question here is how to move beyond the unreflective emotional blackmail practiced by those making appeals -- framed by images of the displaced, the starving, and the dying. **Who learns from humanitarian disaster and what is it they learn?** Why is there such systematic avoidance of what is to be learned from such situations in order to reduce their occurrence in the future?

Checklist of 12 beneficiaries of a hypocritical short-term trump card

1. Distant starving and those in need?

There is clearly every possibility that some will benefit from the urgent assistance for which appeals are made, and from the heroic efforts of the aid and charitable agencies. In that sense, nothing more should perhaps be said. The concern here is however that the response does not meet the level of need and will not meet the needs of those who will be starving in the future. In that sense it can be understood as but a token response.

Where is the evaluation of the track record of responses to such appeals? What percentage of the starving do not benefit from such aid? What percentage die as a consequence? What attention is given to the "left behind", in the past, currently, and in the future? Framed otherwise, what percentage fall through the safety nets for the starving?

If such percentages are significant, what thinking does this suggest may be necessary to reduce such numbers in the future -- rather than to institutionalize inadequate, partial responses? Are these simply a salve to consciences unwilling to reframe the situation in more radical terms -- implying other forms of implication? Or is none required, with the argument that anything that can be done will save some -- and the suffering and death of others is a regrettable fact of life? Should the focus remain on the appeal process and the language by which the usual suspects deplore the suffering?

Potentially more problematic, as illustrated by the begging process, is the extent to which any success reinforces the sense of entitlement amongst the needy, however tragic their condition. Suffering is then primarily associated with the viability of appeals based on entitlement, thereby inhibiting the questions essential to learning how such suffering is to be avoided in the future.

2. Humanitarian and charitable agencies?

There is no question regarding the heroic efforts of these bodies and their volunteers under extremely difficult circumstances. It is however the case that their identity is closely associated with the capacity to respond and to acquire resources for that response. Their heroic self-image derives from the reality of their front-line positioning -- effectively operating from the moral high ground.

The issue here is whether they are capable of longer-term perspectives -- other than those relating to emergency preparedness, namely the stocks and resources for future crises. Should they be? Is it their role to ask questions regarding longer-term issues driving the emergence of such crises? In the absence of urgency, what questions do they ask? Or do they focus on continuing appeals in anticipation of the need for future short-term emergency action?

3. Moral authorities?

There are of course a variety of bodies and individuals who articulate the nature of any evolving human tragedy. There is little question of the need for this and the articulation may be expected of them in order to encourage urgent response.

The process of articulation does however merit a degree of challenge. The language is overly familiar, skillfully deploying a limited set of phrases supported by appropriate imagery: tragic, unacceptable, horrific, inhuman, scandalous, irresponsible, and the like. Is its familiarity cultivating deafness to such appeals in audiences as well as increasing questions regarding their credibility. This is more obvious in the case of the hyperbole deployed in marketing [puffery](#) for commercial purposes.

What is to be recognized regarding the need for such bodies to be associated with the moral high ground -- and the capacity to frame the strategic reality in their terms? Is this vital to their identity and to cultivation of the image of their role: UN Secretary-General, the Pope, presidents of countries, royalty, agency spokespersons (UNICEF, UNHCR, etc), and the like?

Clearly there is an ease to indicating what others ought to do -- thereby distancing that role from any obligation for further responsibility. Such appeals may be especially perverse when they frame the need for levels of consensus, "coordination" and "unity" for which there is little probability in practice -- beyond tokenism. Is the skilled articulation an indication of a degree of insecurity on the part of those authorities in relation to longer-term issues which they fail to address effectively -- whether deliberately or inadvertently?

4. Media in quest of stories which sell or cultivate a strategic bias?

Clearly the media have a major role to play in communicating tragedies around the globe calling for urgent response. There is little question of their capacity to do so and the value of the information provided, especially in terms of the personal tragedies of those depicted in imagery possibly courageously and with judicious warning of their unpleasantness for the sensitive. In contrast with institutional articulations of such crises, and their challenge from a moral or ethical perspective, they introduce a human dimension. Hence their focus on breaking stories with "human interest" -- however unpleasant.

Again it may be asked to what extent the valuable presentation of such stories is designed to serve other agendas -- depending on the ownership and editorial constraints. There is obviously the questionable profiting from tragic -- as with the any scandal. More

generally there is the question of the bias associated with any depiction of the starving and the manner in which it serves to downplay other issues (*Vital Collective Learning from Biased Media Coverage: acquiring vigilance to deceptive strategies used in mugging the world*, 2014).

Is the role of depicting suffering merely an extension of depiction of violence in the media for entertainment? How is such **infotainment** to be distinguished from daily fictional depictions of violence and suffering? More problematic is the extent to which the media derive their primary benefit from depiction of "news" -- namely what is "live", even if it dying in the process. Worse still is cultivation of the sense is that the horrific is just today's news -- tomorrow will be "another day", when we can all "move on" and forget the suffering of the past.

There is little motivation to explore the longer-term (unsupported by imagery) or the issues driving the emergence of crises. This is especially striking in the case of the disastrous consequences of flooding, where the strategic decisions aggravating vulnerability to flooding are only mentioned in passing, if at all.

5. **Asystemic strategists and policy-makers?**

Clearly resource crises, their incidence, and emergency preparedness, are all a focus for strategic policy-making. It is this thinking which frames more appropriate responses for the future -- whether or not the insights acquire credibility in the eyes of those capable of allocating resources. The think tanks providing such thinking clearly benefit considerably from crises, whether starving children or otherwise, following requests to them to provide "new thinking" to guide any response.

It is however striking the extent to which such thinking focuses on the obvious, especially what is evident in the shorter term -- and the opportunity for remedial strategies that this offers. It is with regard to the shorter-term that the clients for such thinking are seeking responses. The requirement may well be to focus narrowly on particular issues with short-term political implications. Recommendations for military intervention typically satisfy multiple agendas, as separately discussed (*"Tank-thoughts" from "Think-tanks": metaphors constraining development of global governance*, 2003; *Meta-challenges of the Future for Networking through Think-tanks*, 2005)

More systemic studies are typically ignored as being too complex for the political process. The result is that strategic studies are constrained into a form of blinkered tunnel vision, ignoring systemic contextual factors or alternatives from beyond the mainstream (Ingrid Mathieu, *When Vision Becomes Tunnel Vision*, *Psychology Today*, 3 August 2011). The process might also be described in terms of strategic gerrymandering whereby the boundaries of any approach to remedial action are carefully constrained to avoid more challenging issues (*Conceptual gerrymandering and definitional game-playing*, 2002; *Scientific Gerrymandering of Boundaries of Overpopulation Debate*, 2012)

Especially intriguing is the manner in which efforts to identify the driving factors exacerbating the emergence of crises are limited in scope. This is admirably illustrated by downstream flooding arising from the mainstream of a river overflowing its banks (*Disastrous Floods as Indicators of Systemic Risk Neglect: implications for authoritative response to future surprises*, 2011). The focus is on the downstream phenomena rather than on earlier, ill-considered upstream modifications of the watershed -- previously capable of absorbing excess precipitation. The process is usefully clarified by George Monbiot (*Do little, hide the evidence: the official neglect that caused these deadly floods*, *The Guardian*, 7 December 2015; *This flood was not only foretold -- it was publicly subsidised*, *The Guardian*, 30 December 2015).

As a metaphor this serves to illustrate the challenge to "mainstream" thinking incapable of addressing the "upstream" factors exacerbating any crisis -- such as the suffering and starvation of children. This may be explored as an instance of derivative thinking (*Vigorous Application of Derivative Thinking to Derivative Problems: transcending bewailing, hand-wringing and emotional blackmail*, 2013)

In the case of the current suffering associated with refugees in the Middle East, and fleeing from it -- or from suffering in Africa - **it is remarkable how little attention is given to the systemic relation between bombing a country and engendering refugees in great quantity** from that country. This would otherwise be caricatured as an inability to "connect the dots" -- with the strategic left hand advocating bombing whilst the strategic right hand is in disarray, faced with the influx of refugees.

Given the impact of both increased manufacture of weaponry and the unprecedented influx of refugees, this suggests the value of envisaging a complementary indicator to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This could take the form of **Refugees Per Kiloton (RPK)**, with the latter factor perhaps determined as a function of **TNT equivalent**. This would provide a clear focus for discussion of the subsequent consequence of bombing in those countries manufacturing and supplying weapons. Such a statistic might provide a fruitful framework for discussion of the funding increasingly required to meet infrastructure need of refugees in the countries to which they migrate. The approach could be considered consistent with the recognized need to factor subsequent **decommissioning** costs into nuclear power construction projects.

6. **Interventionists in quest of moral justification?**

Irrespective of the condition of the suffering and the starving, some actors have as their strategic priority the need to intervene in a country or region, whether to ensure regime change or to acquire control of oil resources. Suffering and death are completely secondary to this priority -- considered a completely acceptable form of collateral damage, as documented in some detail by Rebecca Gordon (*America Revisits the Dark Side: candidates compete to promise the most torture and slaughter*, *Information Clearing House*, 7 January 2016).

The suffering is indeed of great value in providing a moral justification for such intervention in the eyes of significant portions of the electorate -- and as a means of justifying any resulting collateral damage, however unacceptable otherwise. Hence cultivation of the term [humanitarian intervention](#). More bizarre is the manner in which suffering engenders [appeals to the international community](#) -- effectively a deity surrogate, whether it exists or not. This nebulous entity is readily to be recognized as a coalition of interventionists with a quixotic sense of responsibility (*International Community as God or Sorcerer's Apprentice?* 2015).

Interventionists benefit from highly constrained systemic framing, which they evoke -- and for which they call, and provide major funding. Hence the bombing of those most readily held to blame for strategic purposes. There is little question of a broader strategic framework, informed by a more systemic, long-term perspective. This is exemplified by the recent challenge of "winning the war" in the Afghan-Iraq arena, but failing to "[win the peace](#)" and engage effectively in the [nation-building](#) process for which the intervention was purportedly conceived.

Worse still, there are obvious indications of having completely "lost the war" in terms of "[winning hearts and minds](#)". The widespread condition of permanent refugees, starving in refugee camps lacking infrastructure, is an exemplification of this.

7. **Planners for strategic responses to foreseen pain to come?**

To the extent that there is recognition of the probability of crises to come -- from a longer-term perspective -- there is need for authorities to habituate the population to the associated suffering to be expected. People will be confronted by this to a far higher degree in the near future. The pain to come cannot be handled as a strategic issue for which remedial responses need to be sought, for the reasons noted above. Rather the focus is therefore on eliciting acceptance of the increase in the level of suffering - - much closer to home -- and cultivating a tolerance of such pain in others. This is most obvious in the case of the increasing numbers of beggars in the streets of developed countries -- accompanied by children claimed to be starving.

Conditioning or grooming people for tolerance of visible suffering recalls the tolerance required of those in centuries past in countries now claiming to be developed -- public executions ([burning at the stake](#), [drawing-and-quartering](#)). Clearly those in developing countries have long been habituated to exposure to such suffering -- beggars, maimed, dead in the streets, etc. Such grooming includes the cultivation of acceptance of short-term responses -- framed by governance as necessarily "exceptional" -- irrespective of any regrettably associated collateral damage.

In this case it is clear that the focus on the longer-term is one framed in terms of adaptation to exposure to suffering rather than on any attempt to explore how it is engendered. There is total abdication of responsibility with regard to the latter. The former is easier to enable since it is consistent with the systemic negligence in which governance has demonstrated such considerable skill.

8. **Developers, manufacturers and suppliers of emergency supplies -- and of security services?**

Clearly those with such commercial interests have every reason to appreciate the images of starving children as a form of marketing for their products and services -- when any funds become available. The greater the suffering the better, most notably for the armaments industry (Andrea Germanos, *We're in the Business of Killing Terrorists and Business is Good*, *Common Dreams*, 4 December 2015). Strangely it is the permanent members of the UN Security Council whose economies are significantly dependent on that industry, most notably at present with respect to the supply and use of weaponry in the Middle East arena.

However, they too must favour the short-term from whose emergencies their business is derived. They have little interest in resolving issues which might deprive them of income in the longer term.

9. **Authorities needing urgent public distraction from intractable issues of governance?**

Governance is becoming evermore problematic. It is questionable whether global civilization is governable in any desirable traditional sense (*Ungovernability of Sustainable Global Democracy?* 2011). Authorities are therefore in desperate need of issues which both disguise this fact and offer a sense of coherence, sustaining a belief in that capacity. The need is admirably illustrated by the initiative of [Jo Moore](#) within the Blair government on the occasion of 9/11 (*Sept 11: 'a good day to bury bad news'*, *The Telegraph*, 10 October 2001)

Terrorism provides a remarkable focus for this purpose, as separately argued (*Promoting a Singular Global Threat -- Terrorism Strategy of choice for world governance*, 2002). The focus provided by images of starving children serves to frame this preoccupation.

Starvation imagery constitutes a "strategic simplifier", consistent with the [KISS principle](#) and therefore comprehensible to the majority. This is also consistent with the cultivation of doubt and confusion, in contrast to the cultivation of remedial responses of requisite systemic complexity encompassing controversial issues ([Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, Merchants of Doubt: how a handful of scientists obscured the truth on issues from tobacco smoke to global warming](#), 2010). There is no call for leadership or governance capable of managing complexity -- other than by simplification, and especially through oversimplification, as indicated by the current US presidential campaign.

10. **Abrahamic religions with a divine mission?**

In the strangest of ways these religions benefit significantly and perversely from the visible starvation of children. The religions are necessarily prominent in the articulation of the need for compassion and in deploring the irresponsibility of those who fail to

respond to those in need in the shorter term. More intriguing is their longer term understanding of the role of suffering in relation to the will of the deity of which they variously claim a unique and exclusive comprehension. Suffering and death encourage participation in religious belief and the associated processes, most notably rituals and prayer.

More problematic is the sense in which suffering serves a more fundamental purpose within that perspective -- to the point that it may be argued that the religions have a particular interest in "human sacrifice" as a catalyst for engagement in their pattern of belief (*Systemic Reliance of World Religions on Human Sacrifice: covert use of fatal conflict to ensure vital resource management*, 2014). The images of suffering trigger a sense of compassion with which those religions necessarily associate themselves -- most notably as a fundamental and necessary intermediary between the individual and understanding of the divine.

Given the interpretation shared by these religions of the divine mandate to *Be fruitful and multiply* (*Genesis 1:28*), the level of suffering in no way encourages reflection on more prudent strategies in the face of severely constrained resources. On the contrary, the deaths resulting from starvation are interpreted as an indication that, irrespective of the costs, even more people should be "pumped into" a system that is proving inherently ungovernable. This ungovernability inhibits the distribution of resources -- of which it is claimed there is no lack.

The suffering is thus welcomed as an effective form of blackmail to ensure that others learn to modify their behaviour in response to that divine injunction -- even if some must then suffer on a scale reminiscent of that of *Aztec ritual sacrifice* (80,000 over four days, for example). In contrast to the points above, the focus of the religions thus claims to be on the longer term, irrespective of any suffering in the shorter term. That suffering is readily understood as negligible -- effectively as a form of collateral damage in the course of fulfillment of a divinely enjoined mission. More curious and perverse, however, is the sense for some of "helping God" -- namely that augmenting levels of suffering may even trigger earlier the prophesied intervention of the divine.

11. Framers of selected others as evil?

Those seeking the simplest explanation of the suffering of children, as depicted, focus readily on it being as a consequence of evil. Those responsible are readily to be identified, whether to justify intervention or in support of counteracting religious beliefs. The suffering is thus a direct pointer, welcomed as indicative of those embodying evil who have engendered that suffering and merit any feasible constraint by the righteous -- according to the principles of *just war theory*.

The suffering thus frames and gives focus to those others it is appropriate to blame -- then necessarily completely disassociated from those identifying the blameworthy (*Varieties of blameworthy collective error?* 2015). The images thus offer a means of reinforcing radical biases and exonerating those who hold them, enabling *plausible deniability*.

12. Pro-growth constituencies?

As indicated above, the focus on the need for the most urgent response to those suffering necessarily obscures, and renders irresponsible, any question of how the crisis has been engendered. As indicated above, it is ironically reminiscent of the adage: *Shoot first; ask questions after*. As a "business opportunity", this strategy is tragically symbolized by the targetting of hospitals for the desperately needy of *Médecins Sans Frontières* (*Kunduz Bombing Doctors Without Borders*, *The Huffington Post*, 14 October 2015; *U.N. Condemns Fatal Bombing of Doctors Without Borders Hospital in Yemen*, *NBC News*, 11 January 2016).

Starvation naturally justifies every effort, subsequently, to replace the numbers lost by death and to provide for possible future losses by increasing those numbers. It reinforces other arguments in relation to *ageing populations*, *sub-fertility replacement levels* and *labour shortage*.

Missing is any consideration whatsoever of whether that crisis would have been far less tragic had there been fewer people in the first place. The consideration is also relevant to the gravity of future crises whose emergence there is little reason to doubt.

Expressed otherwise, would the severity of humanitarian crises be significantly diminished if the numbers of people exposed to them were reduced? Are there good reasons to suspect that this would be true of most resource-related crises, as separately argued (*Resource Insights from Plus or Minus 12 People on a Liferaft: thought experiment to highlight global dilemmas in a comprehensible context*, 2014)?

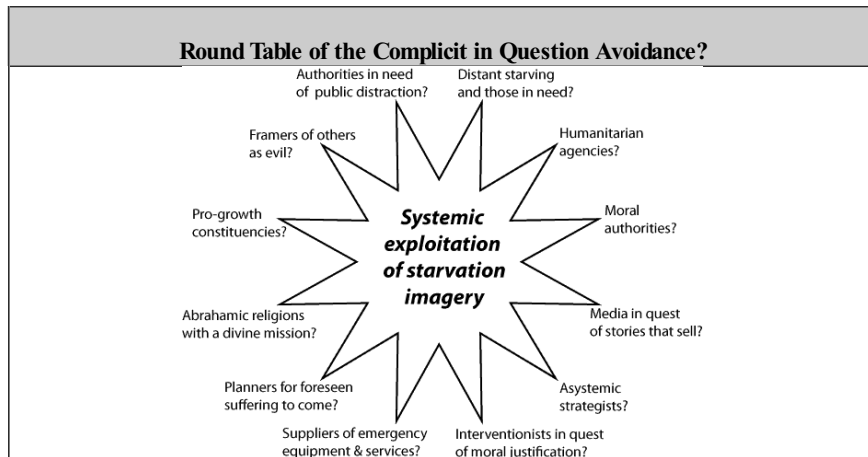
Again, in the absence of governance capable of ensuring effective distribution of resources -- whether available somewhere, or not -- would it not be prudent to recommend constraints on population growth, rather than encouraging it by every means, explicit or tacit?

Tragically psychic numbing is further exacerbated by imagery of starving families with many children -- often far more than those in families in developed counties. Prudence would suggest limiting births in conditions vulnerable to severe resource constraint. Imprudence invites indifference to the consequent fatalities, however regrettable. As matters stand, psychic numbing is being systematically cultivated within a global civilization seemingly incapable of addressing such issues effectively. Expressed otherwise, hearts are indeed being "hardened".

Underlying this process is the cynical dependence of humanity on growth at any cost (Dirk Philipsen, *The Growth Delusion: it's time to stop believing in GDP*, *Resilience*, March 2015; Bob Lloyd, *The Growth Delusion, Sustainability*, 2009; Sramana Mitra, *Focus on Sustainable Growth, NOT Growth at All Cost*, *The Huffington Post*, 5 October 2015). Is there some probability that

arguments to the contrary are framed by "merchants of doubt", as with respect to other global issues (as noted above)?

To compensate for the inadequacies of imprudent governance, dependence on growth is however perceived to be essential to economic viability as it is currently imagined and promulgated -- increasingly indistinguishable from reminiscent of the dynamics of [pyramid selling](#) and a [Ponzi scheme](#). The suffering framed by starvation imagery is then to be recognized as a "cost of doing business as usual" -- a form of collateral damage for which further population increase is a natural remedy, if not essential. The mind set is reminiscent of that determining the [Zong massacre](#) and the subsequent commercial arguments to recover the cost of the investment from insurers. Its implications are explored by [Ian Baucom](#) (*Specters of the Atlantic: finance capital, slavery, and the philosophy of history*, 2005) in terms of the perspective of [Gayatri Spivak](#) (*A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: towards a history of the vanishing present*, 1999).



Comments from humanitarian perspectives

The significance of "humanitarian" in relation to population growth can be understood to emerge in relation to the UN World Humanitarian Summit (Istanbul, May 2016)

Announcement of the Summit by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon:

Conflict and natural disasters, combined with rapid population growth, persistent poverty and climate change mean that ever more people need help every year. We need to find innovative ways to make humanitarian action more effective and inclusive to respond to the challenges of the future.

Final summary:

In the final summary, no mention is made of population growth, as such. Reference is only made to vulnerable populations -- whose vulnerability presumably increases with population growth and the increasing demands on scarce resources. (*Chair's Summary: Standing up for Humanity -- Committing to Action*, 2016). This reflects the framework of the event previously clarified by the UN Secretary-General (*One Humanity: Shared Responsibility, United Nations*, 2 February 2016)

No account appears to have been taken of the following:

- *Too Important to Fail: addressing the humanitarian financing gap* (January 2016), namely the pre-Summit report to the United Nations Secretary-General of the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing:
 - But paradoxically the world is also more fragile today and globally we are ill-equipped to cope with multiple shocks caused by financial crises, natural disasters and violent extremism: phenomena which are increasingly frequent and likely to spread across national boundaries, and exacerbated by rapid population growth (p. 11)
 - The current business model of the global humanitarian system is built almost entirely upon retrospective finance after the needs arise. To a great extent it ignores the 'new normal' in which population growth, climate change, competition for limited resources and violent extremism are creating regions of instability which do not recognise borders. (p. 14).
- *Synthesis of the Consultation Process for the World Humanitarian Summit* (5 October 2015):
 - Poverty, hunger, diseases, natural hazards, water shortages, climate change, population growth, unplanned rapid urbanization, mass migration, and food and water insecurity may threaten hundreds of millions of people in the decades to come. (p. 18)
- *World Humanitarian Summit Blog*:
 - Although over-population is the direct cause of, or contributes to, all major problems faced by the world community

(climate warming, food and water shortages, resource wars, resource exploitation by other countries, religious and ethnic tensions, environmental damage) I have not been able to find a single entry devoted to this topic.

- The UN and other international organizations have basically ignored this problem for generations. All these good will programs and intentions will go the way of all the others if the central problem is not attacked. Three generations of one-child families (to bring world population down to a billion) has to be placed on the international agenda.
- *Population matters: True humanity means fewer humans*
 - What can be done? One thing we can all do is to have fewer children. A human population rising by 80 million a year puts pressure on resources of all kinds. Such pressure is destroying our planet's resources and environment. It means communities are increasingly vulnerable to natural disasters, and it can easily result in conflict and mass migration. When there is a crisis, greater human numbers mean that the consequences are greater, and harder to address.

***Why no comments on overpopulation at the Summit?
Was this a precondition of the participation and support of some, if not many?
Who blocked attention to the matter -- and why?***

Widely-disseminated image of 5-year-old Omran Daqneesh saved following an air strike in Aleppo (August 2016)



Who is it convenient to blame?
Who made the bomb?
Who sold it?
Who delivered it?
Who is telling the truth on the matter?
Who benefits from misleading media coverage?
Who does not want such questions answered?

Paul Craig Roberts: *Crocodile Tears For Aleppo Poster Child*
(*Information Clearing House*, 19 August 2013)

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