INTRODUCTION

This is a book about nightmares, catastrophes – and dreams. It is also about the everyday, the routines that give our lives continuity and substance. It is about SUVs – Sports Utility Vehicles, or 4x4s. The book is a prolonged enquiry into a single question: why does anyone, anyone at all, for even a single day longer, continue to drive an SUV? For their drivers have to be aware that they are contributing to a crisis of epic proportions concerning the world’s climate. On the face of things, what could be more disturbing than the possibility that they are helping to undermine the very basis of human civilization?

In case it isn’t obvious, I hasten to add that SUVs are a metaphor. If I can put it this way, we are all SUV drivers, because so few of us are geared up to the profundity of the threats we face. For most people there is a gulf between the familiar preoccupations of everyday life and an abstract, even if apocalyptic, future of climate chaos. Almost everyone across the world must have heard the phrase ‘climate change’ and know at least a bit about what it means. It refers to the fact that the greenhouse gas emissions produced by modern industry are causing the earth’s climate to warm up, with potentially devastating consequences for the future. Yet the vast majority are doing very little, if anything at all, to alter their daily habits, even though those habits are the source of the dangers that climate change has in store for us.
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It is not as if climate change is creeping up on us unawares. On the contrary, large numbers of books have been written about it and its likely consequences. Serious worries about the warming of the earth's climate were expressed for a quarter of a century or more without making much of an impact. Within the past few years the issue has jumped to the forefront of discussion and debate, not just in this or that country but across the world. Yet, as collective humanity, we are only just beginning to take the steps needed to respond to the threats that we and succeeding generations are confronting. Global warming is a problem unlike any other, however, both because of its scale and because it is mainly about the future. Many have said that to cope with it we will need to mobilize on a level comparable to fighting a war; but in this case there are no enemies to identify and confront. We are dealing with dangers that seem abstract and elusive, however potentially devastating they may be.

No matter how much we are told about the threats, it is hard to face up to them, because they feel somehow unreal – and, in the meantime, there is a life to be lived, with all its pleasures and pressures. The politics of climate change has to cope with what I call 'Giddens's paradox'. It states that, since the dangers posed by global warming aren't tangible, immediate or visible in the course of day-to-day life, however awesome they appear, many will sit on their hands and do nothing of a concrete nature about them. Yet waiting until they become visible and acute before being stirred to serious action will, by definition, be too late.

Giddens's paradox affects almost every aspect of current reactions to climate change. It is the reason why, for many citizens, climate change is a back-of-the-mind issue rather than a front-of-the-mind one. Attitude surveys show that most of the public accept that global warming is a major threat; yet only a few are willing to alter their lives in any significant way as a result. Among elites, climate change lends itself to gestural politics – grandiose-sounding plans largely empty of content.

What social psychologists call 'future discounting' further accentuates Giddens's paradox – more accurately, one could say it is a sub-category of it. People find it hard to give the same level of reality to the future as they do to the present. Thus a small reward offered now will normally be taken in
preference to a much larger one offered at some remove. The same principle applies to risks. Why do many young people take up smoking even though they are well aware that, as it now says on cigarette packets, 'smoking kills'? At least part of the reason is that, for a teenager, it is almost impossible to imagine being 40, the age at which the real dangers start to take hold and become life-threatening.

Giddens's paradox is at the centre of a range of other influences that tend to paralyse or inhibit action. Think back to the SUV. In the US, lots of people drive them, partly because, under the presidency of George W. Bush, no attempt was made to impose the taxes on gas-guzzling vehicles that some other countries have levied. The large motor-vehicle companies, not just in America but to some extent elsewhere as well, continued to pour them forth and had a vested interest in so doing. And their sales had a certain justifiable rationale. SUVs are valuable in rough terrain. People who use them in cities often do so because of a sense of style, but also because they offer more protection in accidents than smaller vehicles do. And not all SUV drivers are macho men by any means. Women sometimes drive them, because of the sense of security they provide.

People carry on driving SUVs for other reasons too. There is a high level of agreement among scientists that climate change is real and dangerous, and that it is caused by human activity. A small minority of scientists, however - the climate change 'sceptics' - dispute these claims, and they get a good deal of attention in the media. Our driver can always say, 'it's not proven, is it?' if anyone were to suggest that he should change his profligate ways. Another response might be: 'I'm not going to change unless others do', and he could point out that some drive even bigger gas-guzzlers, like Bentleys or Ferraris. Yet another reaction could be: 'Nothing that I so, as a single individual, will make any difference'. Or else he could say, 'I'll get round to it sometime', because one shouldn't underestimate the sheer force of habit. I would suggest that even the most sophisticated and determined environmentalist - who owns no car at all - struggles with the fact that, under the shadow of future cataclysm, there is a life to be lived within the constraints of the here-and-now.
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As for SUVs, so for the world: there is a long way to go before rhetoric becomes reality. Politicians have woken up to the scale and urgency of the problem and many countries have recently introduced ambitious climate change policies. Over the past few years, a threshold has been crossed: most political leaders are now well aware of the hazards posed by climate change and the need to respond to them. Yet this is just the first wave – the bringing of the issue onto the political agenda. The second wave must involve embedding it in our institutions and in the everyday concerns of citizens, and here, for reasons just mentioned, there is a great deal of work to do. The international community is on board, at least in principle. Negotiations aimed at limiting global warming have taken place at meetings organized by the United Nations, starting in Rio in 1992, moving on to Kyoto in 1997 and then to Bali in 2007, in an attempt to get global reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. They are still continuing, but have produced little in the way of concrete results so far.

Much of this book concentrates on climate change policy in the industrial countries. It is these countries that pumped most of the emissions into the atmosphere in the first place, and they have to take prime responsibility for controlling them in the near future. They must take the lead in reducing emissions, moving towards a low-carbon economy and making the social reforms with which these changes will have to be integrated. If they can't do these things, no one else will.

I want to make the somewhat startling assertion that, at present, we have no politics of climate change. In other words, we do not have a developed analysis of the political innovations that have to be made if our aspirations to limit global warming are to become real. It is a strange and indefensible absence, which I have written this book to try to repair. My approach is grounded in realism. There are many who say that coping with climate change is too difficult a problem to be dealt with within the confines of orthodox politics. Up to a point I agree with them, since quite profound changes will be required in our established ways of political thinking. Yet we have to work with the institutions that already exist and in ways that respect parliamentary democracy.
The state will be an all-important actor, since so many powers remain in its hands, whether one talks of domestic or of international policy. There is no way of forcing states to sign up to international agreements; and even if they choose to do so, implementing whatever is agreed will largely be the responsibility of each individual state. Emissions trading markets can only work if the price of carbon is capped, and at a demanding level, a decision that has to be made and implemented politically. Technological advance will be vital to our chances of cutting greenhouse gas emissions, but support from the state will be necessary to get it off the ground. The one major supra-national entity that exists, the European Union, is heavily dependent on decisions taken by its member nations, since its control over them is quite limited.

Markets have a much bigger role to play in mitigating climate change than simply in the area of emissions trading. There are many fields where market forces can produce results that no other agency or framework could manage. In principle, where a price can be put on an environmental good without affronting other values, it should be done, since competition will then create increased efficiency whenever that good is exchanged. However, active state intervention is once again called for. The environmental costs entailed by economic processes often form what economists call 'externalities' – they are not paid for by those who incur them. The aim of public policy should be to make sure that, wherever possible, such costs are internalized – that is, brought into the marketplace.

'The state', of course, comprises a diversity of levels, including regional, city and local government. In a global era, it operates within the context of what political scientists call multilayered governance, stretching upwards into the international arena and downwards to regions, cities and localities. To emphasize the importance of the state to climate change policy is not to argue for a reversion to top-down government. On the contrary, the most dramatic initiatives are likely to bubble up from the actions of far-sighted individuals and from the energy of civil society. States will have to work with a variety of other agencies and bodies, as well as with other countries and international organizations if they are to be effective.
One can’t discuss the politics of climate change without mentioning the green movement, which has been a leading influence on environmental politics for many years. It has had a major impact in forcing the issue of climate change onto the political agenda. ‘Going green’ has become more or less synonymous with endeavours to limit climate change. Yet there are big problems. The green movement has its origins in the hostile emotions that industrialism aroused among the early conservationists. Especially in its latter-day development in Germany in the 1970s and 1980s, the greens defined themselves in opposition to orthodox politics. Neither position is especially helpful to the task of integrating environmental concerns into our established political institutions. Just what is and what is not valuable in green political philosophies has to be sorted out.

It isn’t possible – or so I shall argue – to endorse any approach which tries in some sense to ‘return to nature’. Conservationism may be a defensible value, but it has nothing intrinsically to do with combating global warming. Indeed, it may even hamper our efforts. As a result of the advance of science and technology, we have long since crossed the boundaries which used to separate us from the natural world. More of the same will be needed, not less, if we are seriously to confront problems of climate change. Partly for this reason, I reject one of the core ideas of the green movement – the precautionary principle: ‘Don’t interfere with nature.’ Moreover, in seeking to stem climate change, no matter what is often said, we are not trying to ‘save the planet’, which will survive whatever we may do. The point is to preserve, and if possible enhance, a decent way of life for human beings on the earth.

The word ‘green’ is in such widespread use that I have no hope of dislodging it. But it is now more of a problem rather than any help when it comes to developing policies to cope with climate change. I shall avoid using the term in what follows.

A whole range of questions has to be asked and answered. I list only a few briefly here. Later in the book, I try to respond to all of them, no doubt with varying degrees of success.

To cope with global warming, a long-term perspective must be introduced into politics. There has to be some sort of
forward planning. ‘Planning’ is not a word with particularly pleasant connotations, since it conjures up images of authoritarianism on the one hand and ineptness on the other. State planning fell out of favour partly because it was oppressive and partly because it didn’t work. If there is to be a return to such an endeavour, what form should it take?

And then there is the issue of coping with risk and uncertainty. Climate change politics is all about risk and how to manage it, and the notion appears on almost every page of this volume. We can’t know the future: the philosopher Karl Popper used to say that if we could, it wouldn’t be the future. The long-term thinking needed to counter climate change has to operate against the backdrop of uncertainty. It is often possible to assign probabilities to future events, yet there are many contexts where existing knowledge is stretched thin and large areas of uncertainty loom. What political strategies are needed to confront this range of problems?

To be able to mitigate climate change, members of the public have to be on board. Most at the moment are not. How can Giddens’s paradox be unlocked? Should people be more scared than currently they are? Yes, but it doesn’t follow that fear is the best motivator to get people to respond. Moreover, there are other risks that have to be faced up to, which intersect with those created by climate change—for example, pandemics, international terrorism and the spread of nuclear weapons.

In democratic countries governments come and go. Moreover, in real-life contexts many issues jostle for attention, including immediate questions of the day, which at the time may seem overwhelmingly important. In such circumstances, how is continuity of climate change policy to be maintained? Climate change, I shall argue, is not a left–right issue. There should be no more talk of ‘green being the new red’. A cross-party framework of some kind has to be forged to develop a politics of the long term, but how? Countering climate change will cost money—where will it come from? Countries that are in the vanguard of climate change policy, as the developed countries have to be, could face problems of competitiveness. Their industries could be hampered by having to compete with goods that can be made more cheaply elsewhere where there are no environmental taxes or regulatory restrictions. How big
a problem is this likely to be? Certainly, many business firms and employers' groups have used it as a basis for dragging their heels as far as climate change initiatives are concerned.

Finally, there are many difficult questions surrounding technology. Investment in renewable energy resources is crucial in countering climate change. Yet those resources won't develop in some sort of automatic way, nor will they be stimulated by the operation of market forces alone. The state has to subsidize them, in order for them to be competitive against fossil fuels and to protect investment in the face of the fluctuations to which the prices of oil and natural gas are subject. Technological change can only be predicted to a limited degree. How should governments decide which technologies to back? How can they cope with the fact that the most radical technological innovations - such as the internet - are often not foreseen by anybody?

To develop a politics of climate change, new concepts are needed and I introduce quite a large number in the book. One is the idea of the ensuring state. As far as climate change is concerned, the state has to act as a facilitator, an enabler - it has to help stimulate and support the diversity of groups in society that will drive policy onwards. Yet it can't be only an enabling body, since it has to ensure that definite outcomes are achieved - most notably a progressive reduction in carbon emissions. An ensuring state is one that has the capacity to produce definite outcomes, upon which not only can its own citizens rely, but so too can the leaders of other states.

Two other basic concepts are those of political and economic convergence. The first refers to how far climate change policy overlaps in a positive way with other values and political goals. Political convergence is crucial to how far climate change policy becomes innovative and energetic, but also to whether it receives widespread public support. For instance, lessening dependence upon the car (all cars), improving public transport and upgrading the quality of the built environment all converge with the objective of reducing carbon emissions. There are much more profound convergences as well. In the developed countries, we can no longer equate progress with economic growth. Above a certain level of affluence, growth no longer correlates highly with wider criteria of welfare.
Placing such a notion of welfare at the forefront might mesh very closely with climate change goals. Economic growth elevates emissions; what is the point of making a fetish of growth if in some large part it diminishes rather than promotes welfare? Tackling climate change, I shall try to show, provides the opportunity to develop a range of other political goals. At the same time, those goals offer the chance to push forward the climate change agenda.

Economic convergence concerns how far economic and technological innovations that are developed to combat global warming also generate competitive advantage to those who deploy them. I have mentioned earlier that the aim of reducing emissions might conflict with the competitiveness of businesses, but could that relationship perhaps be turned around? We might be moving rapidly into a situation in which firms that neglect environmental goals actually lose out in terms of competitiveness, or will do so in the future. The greater the level of economic convergence, the better our chances of success in limiting climate change. It is essential that politicians and business leaders seize, and broaden, the opportunities offered, as many are now trying to do. By far the most important area of political and economic convergence is the overlap between climate change and energy security, on which more below. Through coping with the latter, we are most likely to be able to come to terms with the former.

To these notions I add that of the development imperative. The poorer nations have contributed only marginally to global warming; they must have the chance to develop, even if such a process raises emissions, for a period quite steeply. Development is imperative not simply for moral reasons. The consequences of climate change will worsen the enormous tensions that already derive from global inequalities, with implications for the world as a whole. Through technology transfer and other means, it should be possible for the developing countries to avoid a wholesale recapitulation of the path followed earlier by the industrial ones, but essentially a bargain between the more and less developed parts of the world has to be struck.

Like climate change, energy has suddenly come into the limelight as a fundamental problem for many nations and
for the world as a whole. The underlying causes are to some degree the same. The energy needs of the industrial countries have created most of the emissions that are causing global warming. The rapid economic growth of developing nations, especially China, given its immense population size, is putting further strain on available energy sources, as well as increasing the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Responding to climate change has to be closely integrated with questions of energy security. It has become conventional to say so these days, but I have been struck by how loosely connected in most writings they actually are.

At what point will the world begin to run out of oil and gas, the energy sources upon which our civilization currently depends? There is an intense discussion about when world oil and gas supplies will peak – in other words, when half or more of them will have been consumed. If the peak in world oil and gas supplies is in fact approaching, then serious problems loom. Our SUV driver is there in the midst of them again, of course. In 2008, sales of the vehicles started to plummet. Why? It wasn’t because of climate change, but because of the price of oil, which at that point was rising steeply in the face of worries about supply. Modern society is not only very heavily based upon oil in so far as energy is concerned, but also because oil figures in so many of the manufactured goods which figure in people’s lives. Some 90 per cent of the goods in the shops involve the use of oil in one way or another.

We are currently living in a civilization that, as far as we can determine future risk, looks unsustainable. It isn’t surprising that the past few years have seen the emergence of a doomsday literature, centred on the likelihood of catastrophe. Other civilizations have come and gone; why should ours be sacrosanct?

Yet risk is risk – the other side of danger is always opportunity. A lot of policy mistakes are being made at the moment. Most prescriptions about how to cope with climate change are negative. They are about saving, cutting back, retreating, retrenchment. Many are important. For instance, driving more economical cars, cutting back on air travel, reducing domestic energy bills, walking more often, or taking fewer baths are all
small actions that can add up to a big difference in terms of reducing emissions.

Yet because of Giddens’s paradox, no approach based mainly upon deprivation is going to work. We must create a positive model of a low-carbon future – and, moreover, one that connects with ordinary, everyday life in the present. There is no such model at the moment and we have to edge our way towards it. It won’t be a green vision, but one driven by political, social and economic thinking. It can’t be a utopia, but utopian strands will be involved, since they supply ideals to be striven for. A mixture of the idealistic and the hard-headed is required. For instance, lifestyle changes that serve to lower emissions will have direct economic implications. If they help generate more net jobs, or better jobs, than those currently available, they will have immediate and pragmatic value.

Energetic leadership on the part of businesses, NGOs and citizens will be needed to pursue such goals; so also will the development of new forms of mutual action and collaboration, where necessary making use of the full panoply of modern networked communications. Governments should have more ambitious aims alongside targets. For example, there could be competitions to promote new ideas or technologies, coupled perhaps to public recognition and rewards for those who make breakthrough contributions.

I don’t want to sound panglossian. Quite to the contrary – some policies will have to have a hard edge to them; many will be unpopular and actively resisted. Powerful interests often stand in the way of reform and have to be faced down. My point is that even hard-edged constraints, if handled properly, can – and in fact almost always do – generate new opportunities. We can anticipate, and should do our best to encourage, a surge of technological innovation in response to both climate change and energy security. Without such innovation, it is impossible to see how we can break our dependency upon oil, gas and coal, the major sources of environmental pollution. A turn to renewable sources of energy is essential, and it has to be on a very large scale. Yet research shows that technological change can take years to percolate through the whole economy and society. No quick fix is available to deal with the problems
we face – it’s going to be a slog, even with the breakthroughs we need, and in fact must have.

The prize is huge. There is another world waiting for us out there if we can find our way to it. It is one where not only climate change has been held at bay, but where oil has lost its capacity to determine the shape of world politics.

Summarizing some of the key themes I discuss in the book, my advice to policy-makers would be as follows:

1 Promote political and economic convergence wherever possible and do so in an active way. It is important, for example, to cultivate an advance guard of entrepreneurs who will maximize the economic advantages of enlightened environmental policy. Work with what I call climate change positives – as has aptly been said, Martin Luther King didn’t stir people to action by proclaiming, ‘I have a nightmare!’. Fear and anxiety are not necessarily good motivators, especially with risks perceived as abstract ones, or dangers that are seen as some way off. Moreover, the risks from climate change, as the public experiences them, constitute only one set of worries among others.

2 Look first and foremost to embed a concern with climate change into people’s everyday lives, while recognizing the formidable problems involved in doing so. Indirect means may sometimes be the best way. For instance, the public may be more responsive to a drive for energy efficiency than to warnings about the dangers of climate change. Don’t wrangle too much about targets. What matters at this point is the how of climate change policy. Plan ahead, but remember that the short term is the key to the long term. Target-setting can be an excuse for inaction rather than the reverse. Don’t place too much faith in carbon markets. The point is not only that their level of likely success at present is difficult to evaluate, but that they can easily become a political cop-out. They sound painless even if they are not. Carbon taxes are the way to go, but they must not be introduced piecemeal. A full-scale audit of the fiscal system is needed.

3 Avoid making political capital out of global warming. The temptation to do so may be great, especially when a
government or party is under pressure. If possible, establish an agreement with major party rivals to ensure continuity of climate change policy. Feed a concern with climate change through all branches of government and work to produce consistency in different political areas. It is no good introducing progressive environmental policies and then subverting them through decisions taken elsewhere. Don’t neglect issues of social justice. Poorer people are more likely to be affected by the consequences of changes affecting the climate unless policy is specifically directed to countering those influences.

4. Set up detailed risk assessment procedures, stretching into the long term, since the implications of climate change policy are complex. We have to construct a future in which renewable sources will comprise the bulk of energy use. It will be a far-reaching transition indeed, with a whole raft of complex social and economic effects. Cooperate with other countries, regions or cities in an intensive and continuing way, with as wide a global spread as possible. Season policy with a dash of utopian thinking. Why? Because, however it happens, we are working our way towards a form of society that eventually will be quite different from the one in which we live today. We have to chance our arm.

In the three concluding chapters, I move the discussion onto more of an international level. Because of the volume of emissions already in the air, no matter how successful we might or might not be from this moment on, we will have to face some consequences of climate change and adapt to them as best we can. ‘Adaptation’ cannot mean just coping with such changes once they have occurred. As far as possible we have to prepare beforehand – adaptation must be proactive. It has to draw on the same resources of ingenuity as our attempts to mitigate climate change. We must prepare now to face hazards (but also to grasp opportunities) some way down the line. All countries will be affected, but the poorer nations will suffer more than the developed ones. The rich world has an obligation to help.

There is a clear imbalance between the literatures of energy security and of climate change. Analyses of energy security concentrate – and rightly so – upon the tensions, interests
and divisions that characterize global politics. In discus-
sions of climate change, by contrast, geopolitics appears as
a shadowy presence in the background when negotiations
about emissions reductions are carried out. That balance
needs redressing. Just as we do not have a developed politics
of climate change, we lack a geopolitics of it too. What institu-
tions, mechanisms or international relationships are likely, in
the real world, to deliver on climate change goals? Attempts to
forge international agreements to limit carbon emissions have
been deeply influenced by geopolitical considerations, but
these have rarely been brought into the open. Most discussions
focus on the details of negotiations, or are about the likely
geopolitical fall-out from climate change. What is missing is
analysis of the geopolitical influences that affect the decisions
made by political leaders.

As crucial as national politics will be in responding to
climate change, effective response has to be multilateral – it
must involve nations working together, even countries whose
interests in other respects might seem opposed. The European
Union is an inherently multilateral organization, and has striven
to take a leadership position in developing such a response. I
am a committed pro-European, and I hope its endeavours will
meet with success. However, it is going to be difficult. The EU’s
programmes will work only if its member-states themselves
manage to make the structural changes I analyse in this book.
For reasons I explain, I don’t believe the post-Bali international
discussions are likely to produce much in the way of concrete
results either, although I hope I am wrong.

Other forms of collaboration will have to be pioneered to
complement these discussions. For example, the developed
countries should explore ways of direct bilateral cooperation
with one another, to forge common policies and share the
fruits of technological advance. In terms of relations of power,
the future of the world’s climate lies in some large degree in
the hands of two nations alone – the US and China – since
they contribute between them such a high proportion of the
world’s greenhouse gas emissions. Both are restlessly scour-
ing the world for energy supplies to fuel their economies. Will
they enter into a struggle for resources, or can they learn to
cooperate? A great deal rides on the answer. A Gestalt switch
is needed in the attitudes of the US government to climate change, which President Obama has promised to deliver.

'Yes we can!', he says, referring to America's capacity for renewal. One shouldn't forget that his predecessor made much the same claim, even if in quite a different way - former leader George W. Bush believed that the US was so powerful that it could ride roughshod over the rest of the world should it so choose. 'No you can't!' was the response, and it was a rude awakening. America will be able to lead only through collaboration with other nations and the world community as a whole, only through an awareness of the limitations of its power. That humility of which Bush spoke but never acted upon should be the basis of America's role in the world as the country comes back to multilateralism.

Of course, the impact of world economic slowdown on all this will be considerable. In the wake of the crisis in financial markets of 2008, the state has made something of a comeback. The period of freewheeling deregulation is over. However, a return to the state absolutely must not mean a reversion to the past. We won't find the answers that way. Quite the contrary: we have to find a new role for government and for market-based mechanisms too.

At the time of writing, financial markets are under a black cloud; but they will have a fundamental role in the struggle against global warming, in the context of appropriate legislation. As in all other areas of climate change policy, such legislation should be enabling rather than prohibitive, and promote new government and market-based partnerships. Complex financial instruments have suddenly gone out of fashion, blamed for market collapse. Yet we will need them, because, properly regulated, they are actually sometimes the key to long-term investment rather a force against it. For instance, a lot of ingenuity will be required to provide insurance cover against extreme weather events, even given the advance of global warming thus far. Private insurers will be needed to supply most of the necessary finance, since, given its many other obligations, the state can only be the insurer of last resort.

The end of the era of deregulation means that government is going to have a lead role in designing economic reconstruction following recession. The chance will exist to promote
large-scale investment in new enterprises and technologies geared to a low-carbon future. What is important is that the right structures be set up for the next 20 years and beyond.

Much is being written about the possibility of instituting a ‘Climate Change New Deal’, designed to combine recovery from recession with large-scale investment in renewable energy sources. I am sympathetic to the idea, but it has to be done carefully and with due attention paid to more enduring remedies. In the meantime, there may be a difficult path to tread. Rising unemployment coupled to the steep drop in the price of oil that has occurred reintroduces temptations that could be difficult to resist. If lower prices are simply passed onto the consumer, they may aid recovery, but will reintroduce bad habits. Our driver will be back in his SUV with little reason to dispose of it. Yet the price of oil is certain to rise steeply again as soon as the world shows signs of moving out of recession. The worst outcome of all would be if climate change were simply put on the back burner until recovery occurs, and this we must bend all our efforts to prevent.

This is not a book about climate change, but about the politics of climate change. In the opening chapters I offer only a minimalist account of the debate about global warming. Many detailed discussions are available to the reader elsewhere. I shall spend rather more time, in fact, upon energy security, to make up for the fact that the two are not usually discussed together.