

NOAM CHOMSKY

## Prospects for Survival

LIKE IT OR NOT, we happen to be living in the most extraordinary period of human history.

In recent years, humans have constructed two huge sledgehammers poised to destroy us, with others waiting in the wings. Along with these achievements, the dominant forces in global society have instituted policies that systematically erode the best line of defense against self-destruction. In brief, human intelligence has created a perfect storm. If it continues to rage, the human experiment is unlikely to survive very long.

It appears that we are dedicating ourselves to confirming a grim thesis formulated by one of the leading modern biologists, the late Ernst Mayr. He was considering the possibility of finding intelligent life elsewhere in the universe, and concluded that the prospects were dim. His reasons have considerable bearing on our current plight.

Mayr observes that we have one sample: Earth. There have been, he estimates, about fifty billion species on Earth, so we have fairly good evidence on biological success. The evidence, he argues, is quite clear. The most successful organisms are those that mutate quickly, like bacteria, or that have fixed niches to which they keep, whatever happens, like beetles. As we move up the scale of what we call intelligence, biological success declines. Large mammals never did very well. Humans are a statistical blip in the past few hundred years. The history of life on Earth, Mayr concludes, refutes the claim that “it is better to be smart than to be stupid.” In other words, what we call intelligence may be a lethal mutation.

Mayr adds that the average life span for a species is about a hundred thousand years.

Modern humans emerged about two hundred thousand years ago. They now appear to be engaged in a dedicated effort to confirm Mayr’s thesis—to show that we have perhaps outlived our allotted time on Earth. This enterprise has been under way particularly since the end of World War II, when two imminent threats to survival were constructed by human intelligence, and followed by systematic erosion of the means of defense.

The two awesome challenges to decent survival are, of course, nuclear weapons and environmental catastrophe. The best defense would be a

functioning democracy in which informed and engaged citizens join together to develop means to overcome the threats—as can be done. However, policy making during the neoliberal years of the past generation has significantly enhanced the threats. For principled reasons, the policies enacted tend to exclude the general population from participation in policy formation, often even awareness. These policies have sharply concentrated wealth, and thereby political power, undermining institutions that might be responsive to the public will. They are well designed to diminish authentic democracy. Associated with the erosion of democracy is principled assault on an effective regulatory apparatus that might mitigate the threats. In the most powerful country in world history, the leader of the Free World, we see all of this very dramatically right now.

But the roots run deep.

LET ME TRY to bring together some strands of recent history that intertwine, I think, in order to show that a perfect storm is all too plausible.

The end of World War II was one of the most important moments in human history. It was a time of joy, and also of horror, with the dawn of the nuclear age, an age overshadowed by the dark realization that human intelligence had created the means for terminal destruction.

It was not understood at the time, but the end of World War II also signaled the beginning of another era that threatens organized human existence: the Anthropocene, a new geological epoch in which human activity is dramatically changing the environment. There have been debates about its inception. The World Geological Society has settled on 1950, partly because of radioactive elements dispersed across the planet by nuclear bomb tests, but also other consequences of human action, including a sharp increase in greenhouse emissions. So the nuclear age and the Anthropocene coincide.

One index of the severity and imminence of crisis is provided graphically by the famous Doomsday Clock of the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*. Scientists and political analysts meet regularly to evaluate the state of the world and to determine how close we are to terminal disaster, midnight on the clock. The clock was first set in 1947, with the minute hand at seven minutes to midnight. In 1953, after the USSR exploded an H-bomb, following a much larger H-bomb explosion by the United States, it was advanced to two minutes to midnight. It has oscillated since. In 2015–16 the hand was again moved forward, and set at three minutes to

midnight—the closest we had been to terminal disaster since the early 1980s, when there was a major war scare. The reasons in 2015–16 were the mounting threat of nuclear war and the failure to deal with climate change, which had not been considered before. In the wording that accompanied the setting of the clock, “The probability of global catastrophe is very high, and the actions needed to reduce the risks of disaster must be taken very soon.” That was 2016.

At the outset of the Trump term, the analysts reset the clock, moving the hand still closer to midnight. The reason, in their words, is that they found “the danger to be even greater, the need for action more urgent. It is two and a half minutes to midnight, the Clock is ticking, global danger looms”—the closest to terminal disaster since 1953, when the United States and the USSR tested H-bombs.

That earlier close brush with terminal disaster is worth attention. It tells us a good deal about policy making and world order.

THE OBVIOUS QUESTION IS: was the crisis avoidable, and what efforts were made to avoid it? The answer is startling, and fraught with grim lessons for today.

At the end of World War II, the United States was remarkably secure. It controlled the entire hemisphere, both oceans, and the opposite sides of both oceans. It enjoyed overwhelming economic and military superiority. It largely controlled the major industrial states, which had been severely weakened or almost destroyed by the war, while the American economy boomed: industrial production almost quadrupled, and the basis was laid for rapid postwar expansion. The United States had long had by far the largest economy in the world, with unique advantages, but had not been a major player in world affairs, ceding that role to Britain and France. The war left the United States in a position of power with no historical precedent.

Though the United States was indeed remarkably secure, there was one potential threat: ICBMs with nuclear warheads. They did not yet exist, but surely would. There is a standard scholarly study of nuclear strategy by McGeorge Bundy, national security adviser in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, who had extensive access to internal documents. Bundy’s *Danger and Survival: Choices About the Bomb in the First Fifty Years* does touch briefly on the possibility of averting the one potential threat to U.S. security. Briefly, because the possibility was apparently ignored. As he writes, “I am aware of no serious contemporary proposal, in or out of either government, that ballistic missiles should somehow be banned by agreement.”

That comment deserves close attention. It may be one of the most remarkable and revealing statements in all of the relevant literature on this subject. In short, there was apparently no thought of trying to prevent the sole serious threat to the United States, the threat of utter destruction. Security for the citizenry is a marginal concern, even for its security from instant destruction. Rather, the institutional imperatives of state power prevailed. Furthermore, the potential victims, the population, were left completely in the dark—and still are. Though all of this is public, it is unknown.

Let's look further. Were there some possibilities for diplomatic initiatives to avert the threat of destruction? We cannot be sure, because apparent opportunities were ignored. One was in March 1952, right at the time of the events that moved the clock to two minutes to midnight. Stalin made a remarkable offer: he proposed unification of Germany, which would have largely ended the Cold War. A settlement might have led to elections, which the Communists were sure to lose. There was one crucial condition: that a reunified Germany not join NATO, a hostile military alliance—hardly an extreme demand in the light of recent history.

Stalin's offer was taken seriously by the eminent and respected foreign policy analyst James Warburg, particularly in his important 1953 book *Germany: Key to Peace*. He was ignored. Later references to the possibility were dismissed with ridicule, as I can recall even from personal experience.

Since the Russian archives were opened, attitudes of scholarship have changed. The bitterly anti-Communist Soviet scholar Adam Ulam took the status of Stalin's proposal to be an "unresolved mystery." Washington "wasted little effort in flatly rejecting Moscow's initiative," he writes, on grounds that "were embarrassingly unconvincing," leaving open "the basic question": "Was Stalin genuinely ready to sacrifice the newly created German Democratic Republic (GDR) on the altar of real democracy?" with consequences for world peace and for American security that could have been enormous? One of the most prominent Cold War scholars, Melvyn Leffler, writes that scholars who have studied documents released from Soviet archives were surprised to discover that "[Lavrenti] Beria—the sinister, brutal head of the secret police—propos[ed] that the Kremlin offer the West a deal on the unification and neutralization of Germany," agreeing "to sacrifice the East German communist regime to reduce East-West tensions" and improve internal political and economic conditions in Russia—opportunities that were squandered in favor of securing German participation in NATO.

Were these possibilities real? We cannot be sure, of course. What does seem clear is that what mattered was global power, not security for the irrelevant and uninformed population.

The episode illustrates one of the starkest and most consistent lessons of policy formation. There is much talk of security, but it is not about security of the population, which is at most a marginal concern: rather, it is about security for systems of power, state and private. The topic is much too large to review in detail, but let's proceed for a few more years into the fifties and sixties.

Not long after Stalin's death, Nikita Khrushchev took power. Khrushchev was committed to economic development and understood very well that it would be severely hampered by an arms race with the far richer United States (and with western Europe, which alone more than matched the Russian economy). He therefore proposed sharp mutual reduction in offensive weaponry, and, when he received no response, undertook it unilaterally.

What happened next is described by the late Kenneth Waltz, one of the most respected international relations scholars. After considering Khrushchev's offer, he writes, the Kennedy administration "undertook the largest strategic and conventional peacetime military build-up the world has yet seen. . . even as Khrushchev was trying at once to carry through a major reduction in the conventional forces and to follow a strategy of minimum deterrence, and we did so even though the balance of strategic weapons greatly favored the United States."

There was a Russian response. Khrushchev sent missiles to Cuba in October 1962 to try to compensate slightly for the strategic imbalance that was greatly enhanced by Kennedy's huge military buildup. A second reason, it appears, was to defend Cuba against the murderous Kennedy terrorist campaign against Cuba, which was to culminate in a likely U.S. invasion in October 1962. What followed did almost lead to terminal disaster.

Once again, the decisions made harmed national security severely while enhancing state power. What happened was concealed behind the enthusiastic rhetoric of the Camelot years. And largely remains so, serious scholarship apart.

The crucial conclusion is once again glaringly clear: security of the population is not a major concern of planners. The conclusion prevails right to the present moment. When investigating foreign affairs and government decisions, we routinely discover that peaceful options exist, but are dismissed, though they might well avert disaster. There is no time to review the record, but let's turn to today's headlines.

Today, we are instructed that the great challenge faced by the world is how to compel North Korea to freeze its nuclear and missile programs. Perhaps we should resort to more sanctions, cyberwar, intimidation, an antimissile system that China realistically regards as a serious threat, even perhaps direct attack.

Another possible option was ignored as the crisis developed, and has only belatedly and often misleadingly been mentioned: accept North Korea's offer to do exactly what we had been demanding. China and North Korea had proposed that North Korea freeze nuclear and missile programs. Their reasons are much like Khrushchev's. North Korean leaders are seeking economic development, and understand that they cannot make much progress while facing the overwhelming burden of military production.

The North Korean proposal was rejected at once by Washington, just as it had been two years earlier—and just as Khrushchev's initiatives were rejected by the JFK administration, leading to the closest brush with total disaster in human history.

The reason for the instant rejection is that the Chinese-North Korean proposal has a quid pro quo: it calls on the United States to halt its threatening military exercises on North Korea's borders, including simulated nuclear-bombing attacks by B-52s, sent by Trump in recent months.

The Chinese-North Korean demand is hardly unreasonable. North Koreans, of course, remember that their country was literally flattened by U.S. bombing, and some may well remember the gleeful reports in American military journals about the bombing of major dams when there were no other targets left, the rejoicing about the exciting spectacle of a huge flood of water wiping out the rice crops on which Asians depend for survival—very much worth reading. A part of history that it would be useful to retrieve from the memory hole and to ponder.

The Chinese-North Korean proposal could lay the basis for more far-reaching negotiations to radically reduce the threats and perhaps even bring the crisis to an end. Contrary to much inflamed commentary, there are reasons to think that negotiations might succeed, so the record reveals.

But the offers are rejected in the usual interests of securing power interests.



LET'S LOOK FURTHER into how we are carrying forward our verification of Mayr's thesis.

Last March, the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* published a remarkable report on the vast nuclear modernization program initiated by President Obama

and now being carried forward under Trump. The report discusses how U.S. nuclear force modernization is undermining the strategic stability on which survival suspends, by a slender thread.

The current modernization programs include “revolutionary new technologies that will vastly increase the targeting capability of the US ballistic missile arsenal. This increase in capability is astonishing—boosting the overall killing power of existing US ballistic missile forces by a factor of roughly three—and it creates exactly what one would expect to see, if a nuclear-armed state were planning to have the capacity to fight and win a nuclear war by disarming enemies with a surprise first strike.”

All of this has “revolutionary impact on military capabilities and important implications for global security,” the report continues. The implications are clear. Russian strategic analysts are of course aware that the US now has the capacity to wipe out their deterrent. The Russians do not have our sophisticated satellite-based advance warning systems, and would have little advance notice of a possible attack. With the deterrent at serious risk because of the nuclear modernization programs, at a moment of crisis—and there are all too many possibilities—Russian leaders may be tempted to undertake a preemptive strike just to assure survival, an act that would end organized human life on Earth.

Once again, is a diplomatic avenue possible? It surely seems so. Is it being pursued? If so, it’s not detectable.

All relevant to Mayr’s thesis.

TURNING TO THE SECOND existential threat, global warming, anyone with eyes open should be aware that the dangers are severe, and imminent. How are we reacting? Here’s a recent report from the U.S. business press (*Bloomberg*, March 2): “The boom looks like it’s back. The number of oil and gas rigs drilling in the US has almost doubled. . . . While two dozen nations are coordinating to cut oil production and rein in the global supply glut, US producers are moving in the opposite direction. Over the last four months, output increased by half a million barrels a day. If that rate of expansion continues, the shale boom will break new production records by summer. The US now produces nine million barrels a day.”

The report, one of a flood, illustrates a remarkable fact of current history: while the world is taking halting steps toward facing the existential challenge to survival, the richest and most powerful state in world history, virtually alone, is racing toward destruction, with enthusiasm and

dedication. That has been true since November 8, 2016, another date of great historical significance.

There were three significant events on that date, one important, one extremely important, one astonishing.

The important event was the U.S. election, which virtually monopolized reporting for days.

The extremely important event, which received virtually no coverage, took place in Marrakesh, Morocco, where almost all nations of the world were meeting to try to put some teeth in the Paris agreements (COP 21, December 2015). A verifiable treaty could not be reached in Paris, as had been hoped, because the U.S. Republican Congress would not accept it. On November 8, the World Meteorological Organization issued a review of the state of the climate. Along with other dire reports, the review confirmed “that 2016 was the warmest year on record: a remarkable 1.1 [degrees] C above the pre-industrial period,” sharply above the previous record set in 2015, approaching the desired limit set in Paris. Deliberations effectively ended on November 8. The operative question became: Can we survive with the Leader of the Free World racing toward the precipice? The countries of the world turned to China as the hope for survival. China!

The astonishing event is the dog that didn’t bark, the reaction to these amazing events: Silence.

No less astonishing is that while the richest and most powerful country in history is leading the effort to intensify the likely disaster, efforts to avert catastrophe are being led, worldwide, by what we call “primitive societies”: First Nations in Canada, tribal and aboriginal societies around the world. Ecuador, with its large indigenous population, sought aid from the rich European countries to allow it to keep some of its oil reserves underground, where they should be. The aid was refused. Ecuador revised its constitution in 2008 to include “rights of nature” as having “intrinsic worth.” Bolivia, with an indigenous majority, passed the Law of Mother Earth, granting nature rights equal to humans. In general, indigenous populations are well in the lead in seeking to preserve the planet. The countries that have driven indigenous populations to extinction or extreme marginalization are racing toward destruction.

Perhaps something else we should think about.

THERE SHOULD BE no need to sample the grim reports on threats to the environment that appear regularly in science journals, sometimes making it to major media. Meanwhile, the Republican wrecking ball is systematically



dismantling the structures that offer hope for decent survival. The Environmental Protection Agency, established by Richard Nixon, is being virtually dismantled. More important still is the Department of Energy. Its Office of Science is scheduled to lose \$900 million, nearly 20 percent of its budget. Even mention of climate change is coming under a ban, while regulations are being dismantled and every effort is being made to maximize the use of fossil fuels, including the most destructive, like coal.

It's not just Trump. In the Republican presidential primaries, every candidate either denied that what is happening is happening or—the moderates—said maybe it is, but we shouldn't do anything about it. There is virtual unanimity among party leaders. A remarkable spectacle, which passed with little notice.

The major media play along in other ways. A Fairness and Accuracy in Media (FAIR) study of interviews and press conferences with Trump since he took office on January 20, 2017, found that not a single question had been raised about climate change. Hardly surprising. After all, it's only the most significant policy position of the administration, enhancing a truly existential threat.

Even if sea level rise is more limited than what is anticipated, it will inundate coastal cities and coastal plains, as in Bangladesh, where tens of millions may be forced to flee in the fairly near future, many more later. Today's refugee issues will be a tea party in comparison. The chief environmental scientist in Bangladesh has said that "These migrants should have the right to move to the countries from which all these greenhouse gases are coming. Millions should be able to go to the United States." That certainly agrees with the current mood in the West—and not just the United States, which is extreme (or Britain). Those who think it is better on the continent can turn to a recent poll showing that a majority of Europeans want a total ban on immigration from Muslim-majority countries.

In general, the idea is that first we destroy them and then we punish them for trying to escape from the ruins—calling it a "refugee crisis" while thousands drown in the Mediterranean fleeing from Africa, where Europe does have a certain history. In fact, the so-called refugee crisis is actually a serious moral-cultural crisis—in the West.

LET'S RETURN to the other sledgehammer, the nuclear threat. The major nuclear powers, the United States and Russia, are both expanding their arsenals, in quite dangerous ways. And flashpoints are becoming more serious, particularly on the Russian border. On the *Russian* border, not the Mexican

border—a result of the expansion of NATO right after the collapse of the USSR, in violation of verbal promises to Gorbachev that NATO would not expand “one inch to the East.” At the time, the immediate referent was East Germany—if Gorbachev agreed to unification of Germany within a hostile military alliance, a pretty remarkable concession in the light of history. Gorbachev’s vision of a European common home, a security system from Brussels to Vladivostok with no military alliances, is a fading dream.

George Kennan and other senior statesmen had warned early on that NATO expansion would prove to be a “tragic mistake, [a] policy error of historic proportions.” It is now leading to rising tensions along the traditional invasion route, through which Russia was virtually destroyed twice during the past century by Germany alone. To make matters worse, in 2008 NATO membership was offered to Ukraine, the Russian geo-strategic heartland, efforts later pursued by Obama and Hillary Clinton.

LET’S RETURN FINALLY to the main line of defense: functioning democracy. We can begin with the leader of the free world, the model of democracy for centuries.

In a democracy, the voice of the people is heard. Let’s ask what might happen in the United States if this principle were upheld. One consequence would be that the most popular and respected political figure in the country would have an influential role, maybe even be president. That’s Bernie Sanders, by a very large margin.

The Sanders campaign was the most remarkable feature of the 2016 elections. It broke the prevailing pattern of over a century of U.S. political history. A substantial body of academic political science research establishes very convincingly that elections are pretty much bought: campaign funding alone is a remarkably good predictor of electability, for Congress as well, and also for decisions of elected officials. Research also shows that a considerable majority of the electorate, those lower on the income scale, are effectively disenfranchised, in that their representatives pay no attention to their preferences. As wealth increases, political representation does too, though only slightly—until you arrive at the very top, a fraction of 1 percent, where our policies are pretty much set.

The Sanders campaign broke sharply from that well-established model. Sanders was scarcely known. He had virtually no support from the main funding sources, the corporate sector and private wealth, was derided by the media, and he even dared to use the scare word “socialist.” Yet he probably would have won the Democratic nomination had it not been for

shenanigans of the Obama-Clinton party managers.

Suppose he had won, or even that he had a major public platform today. We might then hear statements like this concerning labor rights: “I have no use for those—regardless of their political party—who hold some foolish dream of spinning the clock back to days when unorganized labor was a huddled, almost helpless mass. . . . Only a handful of unreconstructed reactionaries harbor the ugly thought of breaking unions. Only a fool would try to deprive working men and women of the right to join the union of their choice.”

That’s not Sanders, however. The candidate who said that was Dwight Eisenhower, when he was running for president in 1952. Such was the voice of conservatism during the days of the great growth period of regulated state capitalism, often called the economic “golden age.”

We’ve come a long way since then. Now we are on the verge of seeing the demise of even public unions, about the only sort that remains in the United States. Real democracy would be quite different, so public opinion studies show. Much the same holds for a host of other issues as both parties have shifted well to the right during the neoliberal period, with the Republicans now at a point where respected conservative political scientists describe them as a “radical insurgency” that has abandoned parliamentary politics.

One consequence is anger, frustration, and contempt for the formal institutions of democracy, reactions that often take ominous forms.

The basic fact is that a true majority of the population would never vote for the policies designed by elites. Some simple figures give a good indication why.

In 2007, before the crash, at the height of euphoria about the Great Moderation and the grand triumphs of neoliberalism and neoclassical economics, real wages of American workers were lower than they had been in 1979, when the neoliberal experiment was just taking off. One important reason was explained by Federal Reserve chair Alan Greenspan when he testified to Congress on the wondrous economy he was managing. He informed Congress that “greater worker insecurity” was keeping wages and inflation low. Workers are too intimidated to ask for decent wages, benefits, and working conditions, even in the late nineties when unemployment was low—by neoliberal standards a sign of health of the economy.

Social justice measures also deteriorated through this period—the United States, in fact, ranks at the very bottom of the developed countries of the OECD in such measures, alongside of Greece, Mexico, and Turkey. But profits are booming, particularly in the largely predatory financial

industry, which exploded during the neoliberal period, accounting for 40 percent of corporate profit right before the crash (for which they were, once again, largely responsible). One motive for the so-called reforms of neoliberalism was to reverse the falling rate of profit that was largely a consequence of popular activism and worker militancy in the sixties. That was achieved, so in that sense the reforms were a success—for corporations, not for the population as a whole. Under such conditions, democracy can hardly be tolerated.

Much the same has been true in Europe under the lash of neoliberal austerity programs, which even IMF economists recognize to be unwarranted. But IMF bureaucrats listen to different voices—mostly those of the rich northern banks. Those are the voices that control the unelected troika that determines policy in Europe: the IMF, the European Central Bank, the European Commission.

In his important critical analysis of neoliberalism, *Failed!*, economist Marc Weisbrot has carried out a careful and revealing investigation of the political agenda guiding the destructive economic policies. He studied the reports of the regular IMF consultations with member governments of the EU, and discovered “a remarkably consistent and disturbing pattern.” The financial crisis was exploited as an opportunity to lock in the neoliberal reforms: spending cuts in the public sector rather than tax increases, reduced benefits and public services, cuts in health care, undermining of collective bargaining, and in general moves to create a society “with less bargaining power for labor and lower wages, more inequality and poverty, a smaller government and social safety nets, and measures that reduce growth and employment.” “The IMF papers,” Weisbrot concludes, “detail the agenda of Europe’s decision-makers, and they have accomplished quite a bit of it over the past five years.” An agenda that is quite familiar where the neoliberal assault has proceeded.

In Europe, too, populations would not vote for these measures, so democracy must be sacrificed on the altar of locking in neoliberal reforms. The device in Europe is straightforward: transfer decision making to unelected bodies: the troika. The public response in Europe resembles what has been happening in the United States. Centrist political institutions are discredited, public disillusionment, fear, and anger are running high, sometimes taking quite ominous forms. Those old enough to remember the 1930s, as I do, cannot fail to be alarmed at the rise of neofascist parties, even in Austria and Germany, of all places, and not only there. And bitter memories are not easy to suppress when a majority of Europeans call

for banning all Muslims from Europe, and many want to reverse the real achievements of the European Union, such as free movement of populations and erosion of national borders—which would be quite consistent with strengthening of cultural diversity in liberal and humane societies.

We cannot attribute all of these developments across the West to the neoliberal assault, but it is a common and significant factor.

Neoliberal policies are specifically directed toward undermining the regulatory power of the government, hence undermining the capacity to avert the blows of the sledgehammers. But the effects are more far-reaching. In our state capitalist societies, the power of the government is the power of the population, to the extent that the society is democratic. Neoliberal programs, by their very nature, tend to concentrate wealth in few hands while the majority stagnates or declines. Functioning democracy erodes as the natural effect of the concentration of economic power, which translates at once to political power, by familiar means but also for deeper and principled reasons. The doctrinal pretense is that transfer of decision making from the public sector to the “market” contributes to individual freedom, but reality is quite different. The transfer is from public institutions in which people have some say (insofar as democracy is functioning) to private tyrannies in which the public has no say at all: the corporations that dominate the global economy.

The policies are dedicated to making sure that “society no longer exists.” Such was Margaret Thatcher’s famous description of the world she perceived, or, more precisely, hoped to create. With these words, Thatcher unwittingly paraphrased Marx’s bitter condemnation of repression in France, which had left society as a “sack of potatoes,” an amorphous mass that cannot function. In the contemporary case, the tyrant is no longer an autocratic ruler, in the West at least, but instead concentrations of private power and bureaucracies that are free from public control.

There is also no guarantee that functioning democracy, with an informed and engaged population, would lead to policies that address human needs and concerns, including the concern for survival. But that remains our only hope.

All of which brings us back to Ernst Mayr’s question: Is it better to be smart than stupid? A question for you to ponder, and like it not, for you to answer.

Without too much of a delay.

*From a talk delivered in Montevideo, Uruguay, on July 17, 2017.*

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