

Pascal's Wager and the Future of the United Nations

The war in Ukraine demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the United Nations Organization as a provider of global peace and security. Is there a reason to believe the UN is more efficient in advancing its other goals and agenda?

The book is a fresh look at the future of the United Nations Organization and its “three crises agenda” (climate change, loss of biodiversity, and pollution).

For researchers, professors, students, practitioners, educational establishments, and the public.

Oleg Zaichuk
Yuri Zaichuck

**PASCAL'S WAGER
AND THE FUTURE
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**



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OLEG ZAICHUK –
Doctor of Law, Professor,
Member of the National Academy of Law Sciences of Ukraine

YURI ZAICHUCK –
LLM, Ph.D., MBA

Oleg Zaichuk. Yuri Zaichuck
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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AMR:	Antimicrobial Resistance
APS:	The American Physical Society
CBAM:	The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism
EU:	The European Union
EU ETS:	The EU Emissions Trading Scheme
EU:	The European Union
GHG:	Greenhouse gas
GA:	The UN General Assembly
IAM:	Integrated assessment models
IDEA:	The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IPCC:	The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LN:	The League of Nations
NGO:	Non-Government Organization
NATO:	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDC:	Nationally determined contribution
PR:	Public Relations
RES:	Renewable Energy Sources
Ramstein Group:	The Ukraine Defense Contract Group
RF:	The Russian Federation
TFEU:	Treaty on the Functioning of the EU
UN:	The United Nations Organization
UNDP:	The United Nations Development Program
UNEP:	The United Nations Environmental Program
UNFCCC:	The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
WHO:	World Health Organization
WTO:	The World Trade Organization

INTRODUCTION

Blaise Pascal, a 17th-century mathematician, philosopher, physicist, and theologian, formulated a famous argument, Pascal's Wager. He argued that a rational person should live as though God exists and seek to believe in God. If God does not exist, such a person will have only a finite loss, whereas if God does exist, he stands to receive infinite gains of eternal life and avoid unlimited losses (an eternity in Hell). Blaise Pascal, a brilliant thinker, observed that humankind's actions could be enormously consequential while our understanding of those consequences is flawed. Therefore, inevitably, we are forced to gamble on individuals, countries, or global civilization. One of these areas of uncertainty is science. Blaise Pascal noted that, on the one hand, there was no doubt that natural laws existed; but, on the other hand, as long as our reason was flawed, it corrupted everything, including our understanding of natural laws. In sum, Pascal concluded that as long as we cannot know the outcome of a gamble, we must base our actions on an expectation of the consequence.

For decades, since 1992, a large number, if not a majority, of political actors in the West, including the United Nations, the only universal international organization on the planet and a primary Western institution albeit with broad geographical representation, acted as if the anthropogenic climate change was a scientifically proven fact. Taking the danger of anthropogenic climate change for granted justified immediate action ahead or at the expense of other priorities. The COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine changed everything, which convinced us to have a fresh look at the history of the climate change conjecture and the future of climate change as a political and legal argument.

The United Nations Organization (UN) is a descendant of the League of Nations (LN) that ceased operations in 1946. The LN was the first universal international collective security organization aimed at maintaining world peace. The UN was created for the same goal but based on a somewhat different idea where the permanent members of the UN Security Council will maintain world peace. In contrast, the remaining UN member countries would renounce using war to solve their differences.

The war in Ukraine demonstrated to the world the complete ineffectiveness of the UN in maintaining world peace. The UN and the LN fell victim to a classical collective action problem. Contemporary public international law is based on Westphalian sovereignty; therefore, neutralizing a country willing to start a war would require the use of force by a third party to remediate the conflict. In other words, the UN, by design, cannot maintain world peace.

In 2020, a paper published by a reputable atmospheric scientist and an econometrician joined a list of the top 10% of most downloaded publications from "Earth and Space Science," a journal of the American Geophysical Union. The paper compared thirty-eight coupled atmospheric models, a basis for the UN climate alarm, with the temperature of the bulk atmosphere measured by satellites, the only source of atmospheric data with genuine global coverage. They found that the models project excessive warming of the atmosphere not supported by observational data. They observed that when the atmosphere warms, the amount of heat escaping to space is about twice the amount that climate models release. Based on this and other studies, one may reasonably conclude that the UN climate alarm and related policies are based on exaggerated notions of climate change and, therefore, extra greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere as a result of enhanced economic development are much less critical for the future of global climate than it was previously expected.

Based on the UN-centered climate alarm, governments worldwide are implementing astronomically expensive energy policies based on climate model projections. These policies significantly impact daily lives as energy is a crucial input for survival.

As Robert Solow, a Noble laureate in economics (1987), once formulated the most significant political difficulty with using the climate alarm to justify energy-restrictive policies and legislation: *"The major practical problem in connection with global warming is how do we deal with the poorer parts of the world? How do we intelligently and equitably deal with the part of the world that is now preindustrial or primitive industrial and is "uppy" enough to think it has every right to live as well as Americans or Europeans? How are*

we going to tell them we developed economically by burning fossil fuels at a tremendous rate, by partially depleting reserves and by polluting the atmosphere, but then tell them not to?" What if the climate alarm was based on problematic climate models supported by an ineffective but the only universal international organization on the planet?

On the one side of the political spectrum, we may observe the UN and Western political leaders as firm supporters of the anthropogenic climate change conjecture as the foundation of various international conventions and municipal acts and policies aimed at a dramatic reduction of the use of fossil fuels. On the opposite side of the political spectrum, we may encounter an opposing point of view whose supporters use various data sources to demonstrate that the anthropogenic release of greenhouse gasses is hardly responsible for heating the atmosphere, where the so-called "climate crisis" results from data manipulation.

From a legal standpoint, all the models, publications, and conjectures exist simultaneously and cannot be proven right or wrong. Perhaps, there is no mechanism to dismiss some or all of these conjectures and produce a proven theorem instead of a variety of beliefs. In essence, on close examination, the climate change conjecture is another "Pascal's wager."

If the UN proved ineffective at maintaining world peace, it stands to reason that its' performance is likely to be equally problematic in other areas.

The UN and its "subsidiary" agencies, such as the UNDP and the IPCC, are political organizations. As any political organization, the UN aims to promote specific political goals.

The UN is not an independent entity but is an institution created by governments working for governments, whether these governments represent liberal democracies or authoritarian regimes. Once stated a goal, the UN, like any other political actor, would use various arguments to defend and advance its position. Therefore, the UNDP, UNEP, and the IPCC are political entities aimed at achieving specific political goals, such as eliminating fossil fuels as the primary source of anthropogenic climate change.

UN is a political organization non-separable from constituting governments. Therefore, any opinions and studies from the UN

must be viewed as political speech and treated as political speech. Political speech is treated in the West as “protected speech” and not subject to strict “falsification” requirements.

Governments have independent access to a full range of scientific data and are fully aware of weaknesses and limitations are hidden behind UN-centered alarms’ urgency. Governments act based on various internal and external factors and may or may not use arguments originating from the UN.

The UN and its constituent governments have no monopoly on scientific data and conjectures. The UN and its constituent agencies are not scientific organizations and have no provision for a full range of scientific beliefs. Science is never one-sided. An idea of “consensus” is the antithesis of science. The use of peer-reviewed publications does not guarantee accuracy in modern science. Nevertheless, they may form a basis for a compelling political argument. These observations entirely apply to the “alarm-centered” messages from the UN.

From a world peace and security provider, the UN evolved into a global forum for political arguments advanced by various groups of countries and even non-government actors such as NGOs. The Nordic Group of Nations and the EU are most active in the area of the climate alarm and related “three crises agenda.” At the same time, an absolute majority of UN member states seek industrial and economic development. Industrial development is only possible with affordable, reliable energy from any source, including fossil fuels. Both groups are fully aware of the limitations of science behind the climate and other UN-centered alarms and use various arguments to advance their positions.

The effectiveness of the UN’s “three crisis agenda” would depend on the willingness of sovereign governments to convert the alarm message into enforceable municipal legislation. So far, aside from self-obvious pollution reduction legislation, there is little evidence of a reduction in the use of carbon fuels globally other than the transfer of energy-intensive activities such as mining and metallurgy away from heavily regulated parts of the world, such as the EU to less restrictive environments. If greenhouse emissions embedded in the imported goods are included in the CO₂ footprint, even the EU could not reduce its carbon footprint after decades of investing in green energy technologies.

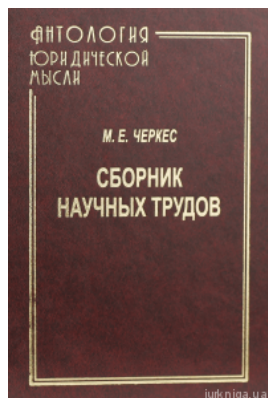
The Homo Sapiens is an “external energy species” and will use as much energy as possible from various sources. Currently, fossil-based fuels provide the bulk of energy humanity consumes, and their use is constantly growing. The urgency of UN-based climate and other alarms has no detectable effect on the use of carbon fuels as major developing countries seek the same sources of energy that the industrialized West used for centuries. Finding an equally effective and affordable substitute for fossil fuels would change the situation. From the available data, wind, and solar are unlikely to displace fossil fuels in the foreseeable future. The effectiveness of strict anti-fossil-fuel legislation has to be backed by the availability of better or equally effective and affordable non-fossil alternatives.

The UN-centered climate alarm appeals to a broad audience worldwide because, whether backed by reputable science or not, cleaner and more efficient way of energy generation would eventually replace outdated technology as long as this replacement would not reduce the standard of living of industrialized countries or limit the development of countries in the process of industrialization.

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