

OMNI NEWSLETTER ON WARS AND WARMING #1, June 28, 2011. Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace

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Running From US Wars Saturday 25 June 2011 by: Sarah Bufkin, [ThinkProgress](#) | Report

America's wars are forcing Afghans and Iraqis to flee their homes in greater numbers. According to a recent U.N. High Commission for Refugees study, nearly one half of the world's refugees are from Afghanistan and Iraq, 3.05 million and 1.68 million, respectively. But neither the United States nor much of the developed world bears the burden of the 10.55 million refugees under the UNHCR's purview globally. Instead, Pakistan, Iran, and Syria serve as the top host countries. The Economist has [charted the numbers](#):

<http://www.truth-out.org/half-worlds-refugees-are-running-us-wars/1309017714>

TROPIC OF CHAOS: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence by Parenti, Christian. Nation Books, 2011.

KIRKUS REVIEWS

An investigative journalist's tough analysis of how some of the world's most vulnerable states—those with a history of economic and political disasters—are confronting the new crisis of climate change.

The Nation contributing editor Parenti (*Lockdown America*, 2008, etc.) focuses on the region of the planet that lies between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. He expects nations in this area to face a catastrophic convergence of poverty, violence and climate change—hence the label “Tropic of Chaos.” The danger he foresees is that the reaction of the United States and other developed countries to this disaster may be to become “armed lifeboats” with militarized borders and aggressive anti-immigration policies. In Parenti's view, the militarism of the Cold War and America's economic policies of privatization and deregulation are to blame for pushing many developing countries into political and economic instability. The social effects of climate change in a given country can be neither understood nor planned for, he writes, without knowledge of the country's history. To remedy this, he offers a grim account of the history of several countries in the Tropic of Chaos, including failed and semi-failed states in Africa, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Brazil and Mexico, making specific connections between economic history, political violence and climate. Water, he argues, has long been a key driver of conflict, and with climate change bringing extreme weather with droughts and flooding, it will become an even greater issue. The chapter on South America leads directly to his discussion of immigration to the United States, where immigrants are met with “the calumny, hatred, and ideological spittle of rightwing demagogues” like Glenn Beck and Rush Limbaugh. In the final chapter, Parenti offers his ideas for how the United States might respond otherwise.

A dark look at a looming world crisis in which the United States comes off as one of the worst villains.

Review From *Publishers Weekly*

In this scathing study, Parenti (*Lockdown America*) argues that climate change is already wreaking havoc on the planet in the form of devastating droughts and other weather aberrations that create a shortage of arable land and resources. In the developing world, these challenges intersect with the ongoing crises of poverty and violence to create what Parenti terms a “catastrophic convergence.” Arguing that coming environmental shifts will “act as a radical accelerant,” he describes how cold war militarism and neoliberal economics have eroded community fabric and public services in such disparate places as the arid savannahs of Kenya, the mountains of Afghanistan, the favelas of Brazil, the jungles of Colombia, and the deserts of northern Mexico, opening the door for “socially disruptive forms of adaptation,” like brutality, genocide, and corruption. As the developing world sinks deeper into crisis, the developed world takes the “armed lifeboat” approach, consolidating wealth and firepower while ignoring the rising tide of need among the planet’s most vulnerable citizens. Parenti’s careful reporting and grasp of politics and economics support the book’s urgent message—that impending global chaos is all but assured unless the developed world finds the political will to imagine a better future. (July) *Reviewed on: 04/18/2011*

Range of Views

“To read this disturbing, indeed frightening book is to appreciate fully the fix we’re in. On the one hand is a looming planetary crisis, the product of climate change, resource scarcity, and widespread poverty. On the other hand is the misguided conviction, to which Americans in particular cling, that military power, deftly employed, will insulate the developed world from these problems. It won’t, Christian Parenti argues. He’s right. We can’t say we weren’t warned.”

—Andrew J. Bacevich, author of *Washington Rules: America’s Path to Permanent War*

“A richly investigated and original account of the role climate change is already playing in contemporary conflicts. This glimpse of the future we most fear arrives just in time to change course.”

—Naomi Klein, author of *The Shock Doctrine*

This important book highlights a new dimension of climate change. It’s not only about the loss of biodiversity, glaciers, and island states, but also about a new era of conflict, violence, and chaos. Parenti shows us how climate change already produces war and aggression. But he also invites us to think about real and structural alternatives to unbridled capitalism and runaway climate change.”

—Pablo Salón, Chief Climate Negotiator and Ambassador of Bolivia to the United Nations

*“Christian Parenti’s exhaustively researched *Tropic of Chaos* presents a disturbing idea: that the species which caused the climate crisis will be the one most affected by it. This powerful book charts how climate-driven violence is already taking hold. If we don’t act with urgency, a troubled future awaits us.”*

—Michael Brune, Executive Director, Sierra Club

Dyer, Gwynne. *Climate Wars: The Fight for Survival as the World Overheats*. Pentagon already has plans for warming wars over food and water. A 1 percent rise in temp will produce 10 percent reduction in food. Several wars are preparing. For example, because Turkey is controlling the Tigris and Euphrates at their sources, Iraq would be at war with that neighbor were Iraq not it so dysfunctional.

WARS AND WARMING

Joseph Romm, author of *Hell and High Water*.

27 May 2011 08:40 AM PDT. Climate Progress

The three worst direct impacts to humans from our unsustainable use of energy will, I think, be Dust-Bowlification and sea level rise and ocean poisoning: Hell and High Water. But another impact - far more difficult to project quantitatively because there is no paleoclimate analog - may well affect far more people both directly and indirectly: **war, conflict, competition for arable and/or habitable land**. We will have to work as hard as possible to make sure we don't leave a **world of wars to our children**. That means avoiding decades if not centuries of strife and conflict from catastrophic climate change. That also means finally ending our **addiction to oil**, a source - if not the source - of two of our biggest **recent wars**. As the NYT reported in 2009:

The changing global climate will pose profound strategic challenges to the United States in coming decades, raising the prospect of **military intervention** to deal with the effects of violent storms, drought, mass migration and pandemics, military and intelligence analysts say. Such **climate-induced crises** could topple governments, feed terrorist movements or destabilize entire regions, say the analysts, experts at the **Pentagon** and intelligence agencies who for the first time are taking a serious look at the national security implications of climate change. . . . From *350 PPM*
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WARS OVER WATER

Alex Prud'homme. *The Ripple Effect*. Rev.*Newsweek*, "Down the Drain" (June 13/20, 2011.) "The next century will be characterized by a ripple of water crises, growing into a tsunami." Future will possibly be "dominated by a war for water."

END OF WARMING WARS NEWSLETTER #1