Climate and Security

A European Perspective

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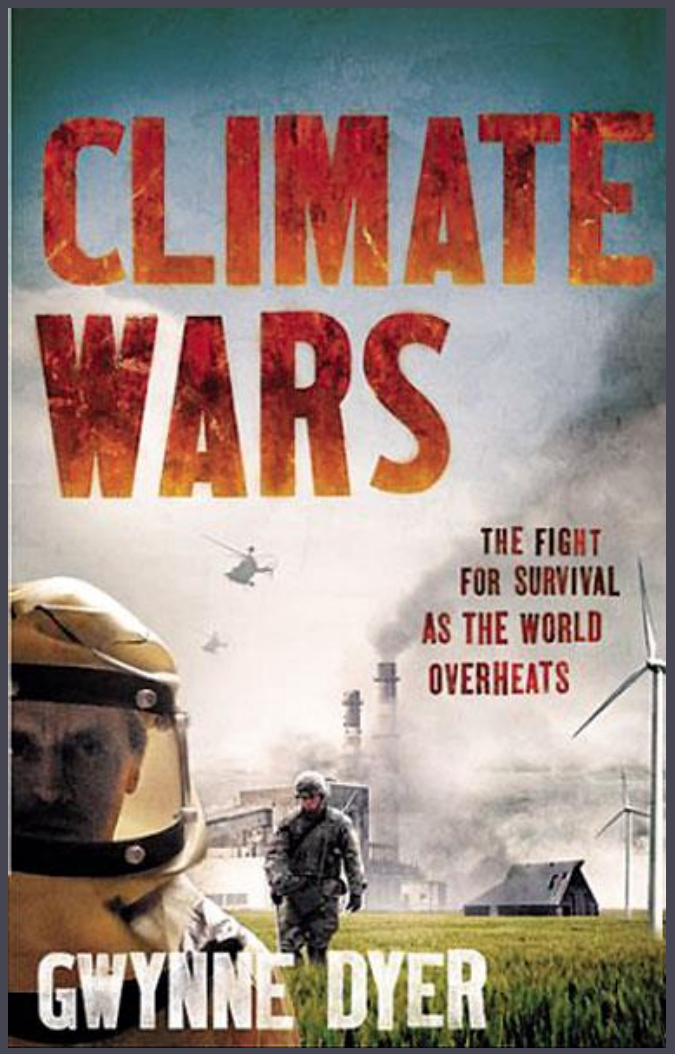
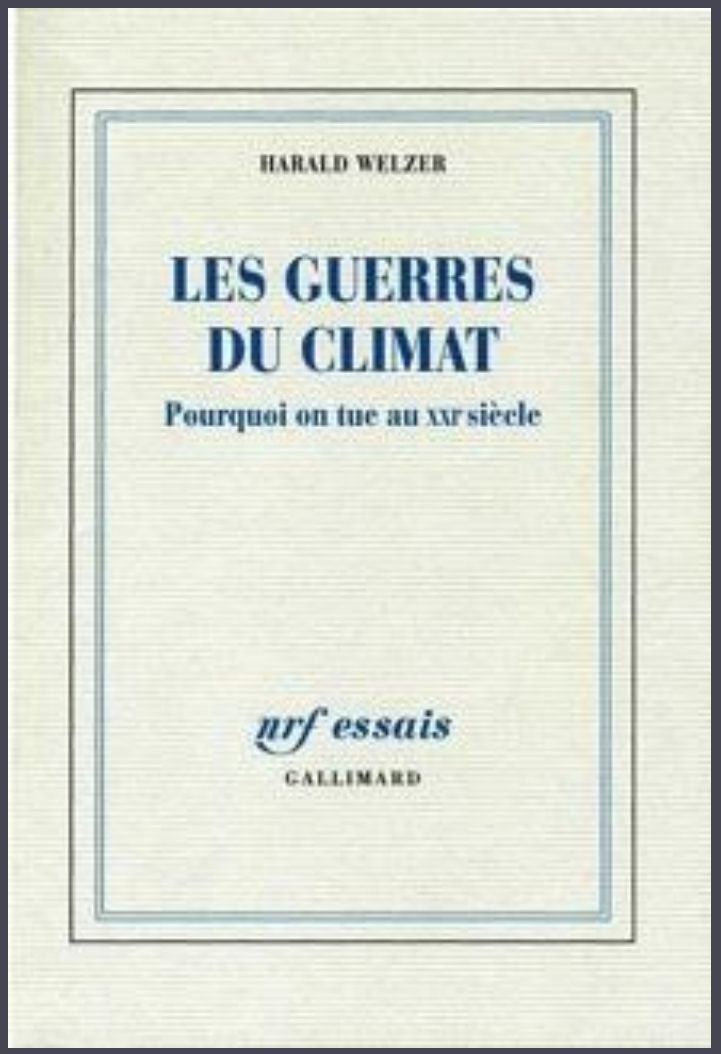
Scarecrows?


CLIMATE
WARS
THE FIGHT
FOR SURVIVAL
AS THE WORLD
OVERHEATS
GWYNNE DYER


HARALD WELZER
LES GUERRES
DU CLIMAT
Pourquoi on tue au XXIe siècle
nrf essais
GALLIMARD

A call for peace on climate and conflict

Researchers trying to work out whether global warming will cause more wars need to stop fighting and work together, urges **Andrew R. Solow**.

Among the most worrying of the mooted impacts of climate change is an increase in civil conflict as people compete for diminishing resources, such as arable land and water[1]. Recent statistical studies[2–4] reporting a connection between climate and civil violence have attracted attention from the press and policy-makers, including US President Barack Obama. Doubts about such a connection have not been as widely aired[5–7], but a fierce battle has broken out within the research community.

The battle lines are not always clear, but on one side are the 'quants', who use quantitative methods to identify correlations between conflict and climate in global or regional data sets. On the other side are the 'quals', who study individual conflicts in depth. They argue that the factors that underlie civil conflict are more complex than the quants allow and that the reported correlations are statistical artefacts. In my view, although the concern that climate change could increase conflict is valid, the link remains unproven.

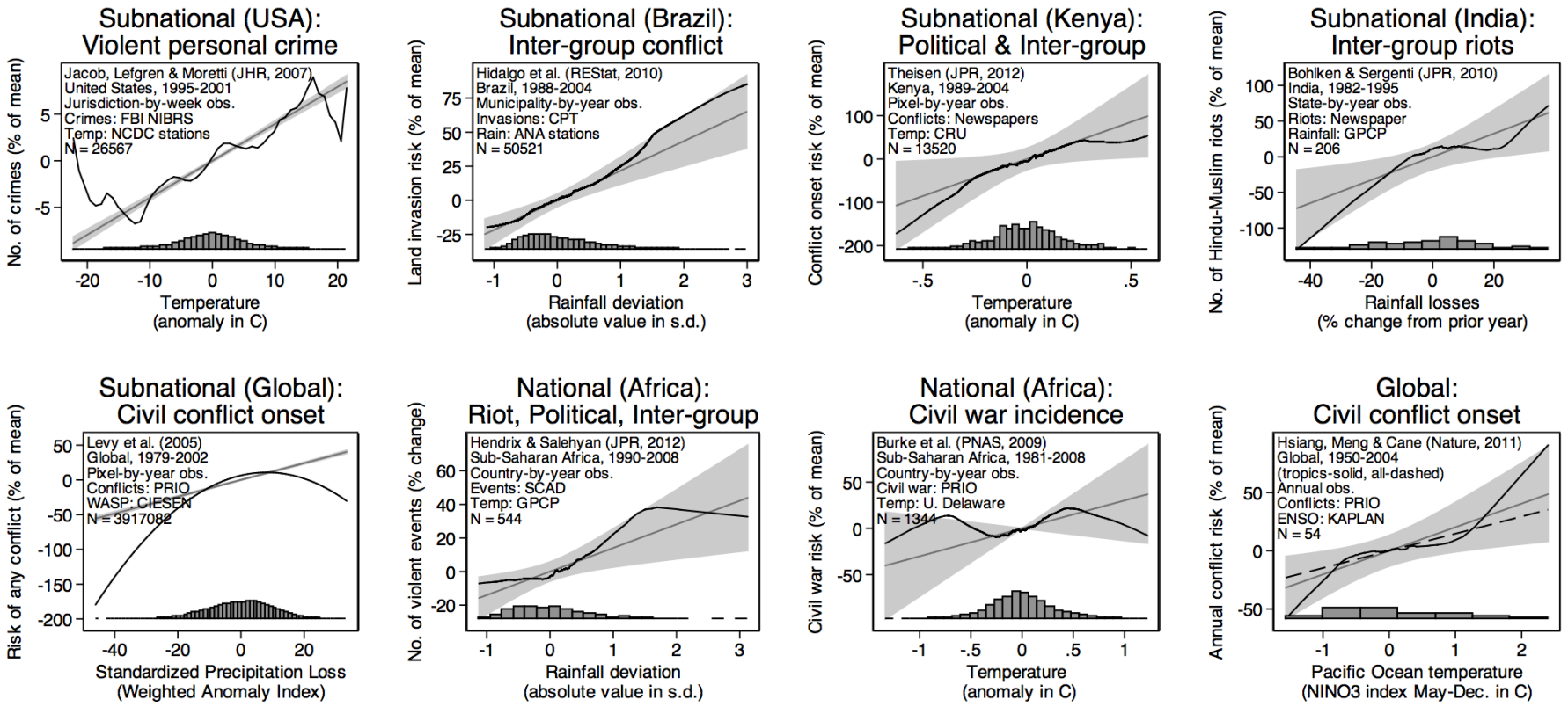
The way forward is for the two factions to work together to make the quants' statistical models reflect the quals' understanding of the factors that affect civil conflict and to strengthen inferences about the impact of climate on human behaviour. The stakes are too high not to try: civil conflict keeps poor countries poor and, if climate change turns out to be an important contributor to such conflict, it would be costly indeed.

QUANTS AND QUALS

Quants use regression models to identify relationships between measures of civil conflict, such as the number of countries in which deaths exceed some threshold, and climate variables, such as rainfall and temperature. The data sets used typically cover a few decades and tens of countries. Attempts are made to control for non-climate-related factors such as national income and the ▶

Five types of risks

1. Destabilisation

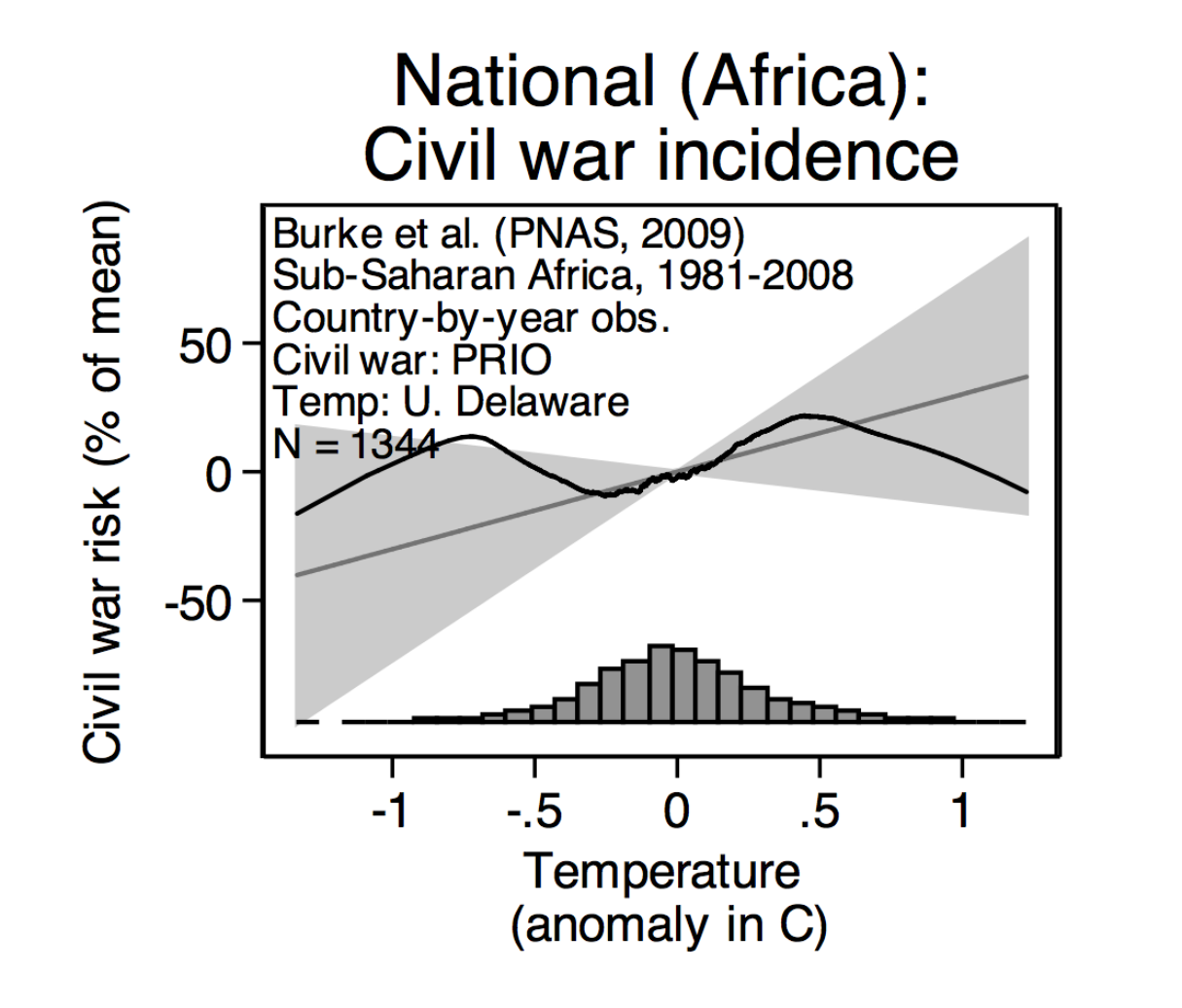


All control for location fixed effects. All control for year fixed effects or unit-specific linear time trends (Burke et al. & Hsiang et al.).
Jacob et al., Theisen, and Burke et al. control for rainfall. Rainfall deviations are relative to climatological mean.
Bohlken & Sergenti control for lagged rainfall losses and two outliers (Gujarat & Haryana in 1988) are dropped.

2. Migration

London Futures, Museum of London, March 2011

3. Agriculture and resources



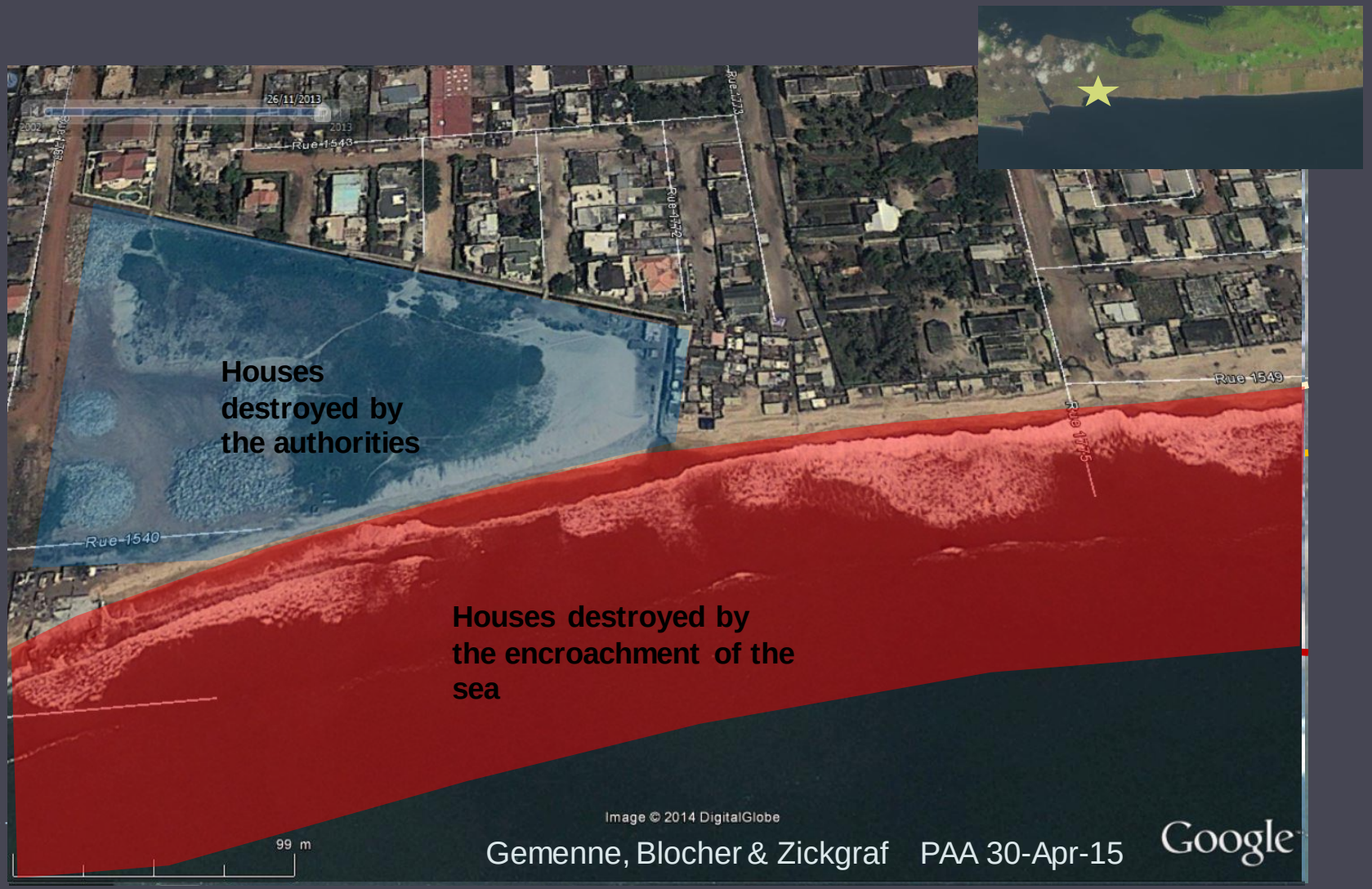
4. Diplomatic tensions

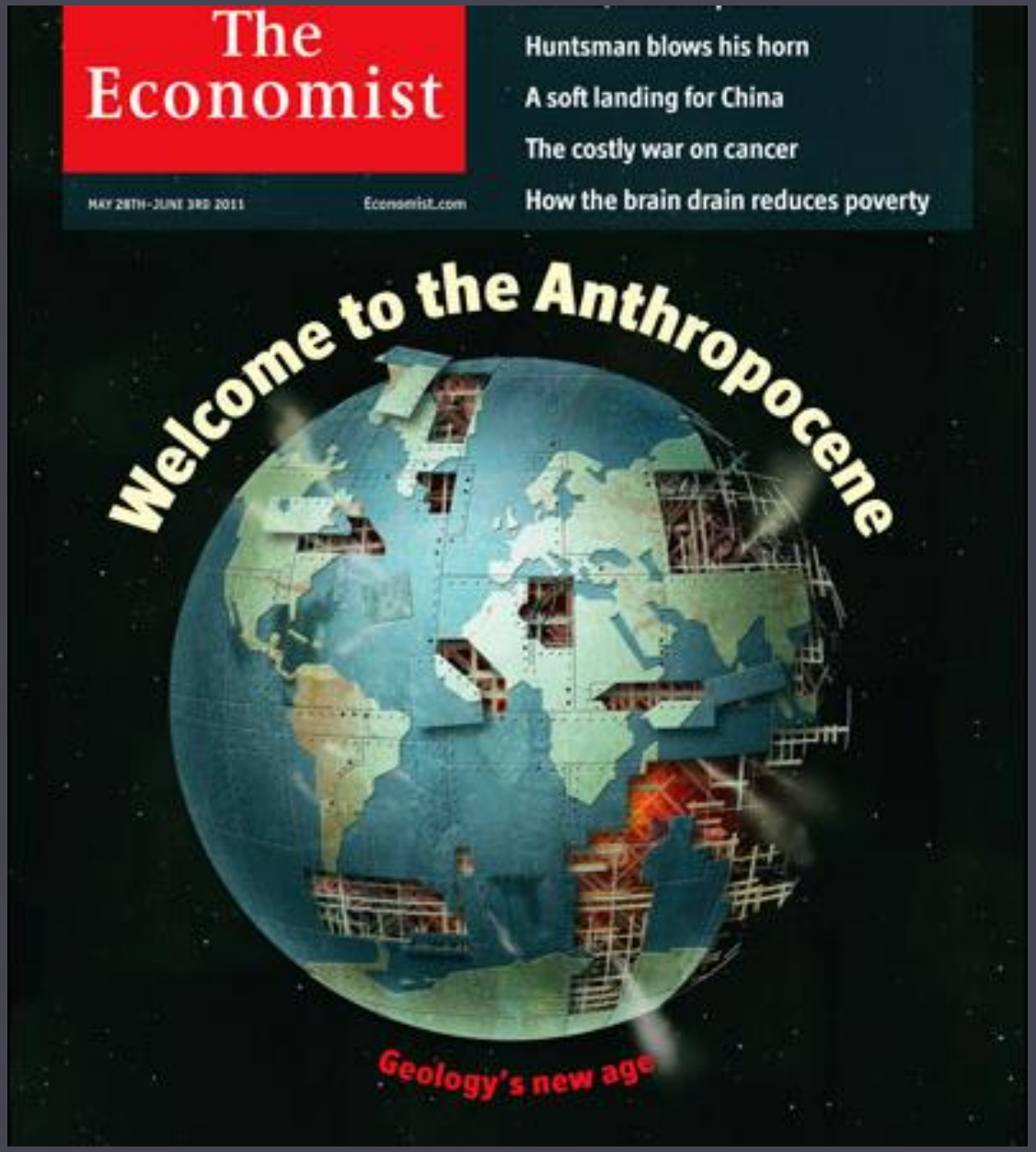
5. Policies


Helsinki
St. Petersburg
Stockholm
Tallinn
Riga
Copenhagen
Dublin
Amsterdam
London
Brussels
Odesa
Venice
Istanbu
Barcelona
Rome
bon

National Geographic, Feb 2014

Near Cotonou (Benin)

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Maldives, October 2009