

Wildfires and the Climate Crisis: Brazil, Siberia, California, South Europe, Queensland

From Climate Denial to Planetary Arson

By [Dr. Andrew Glikson](#)

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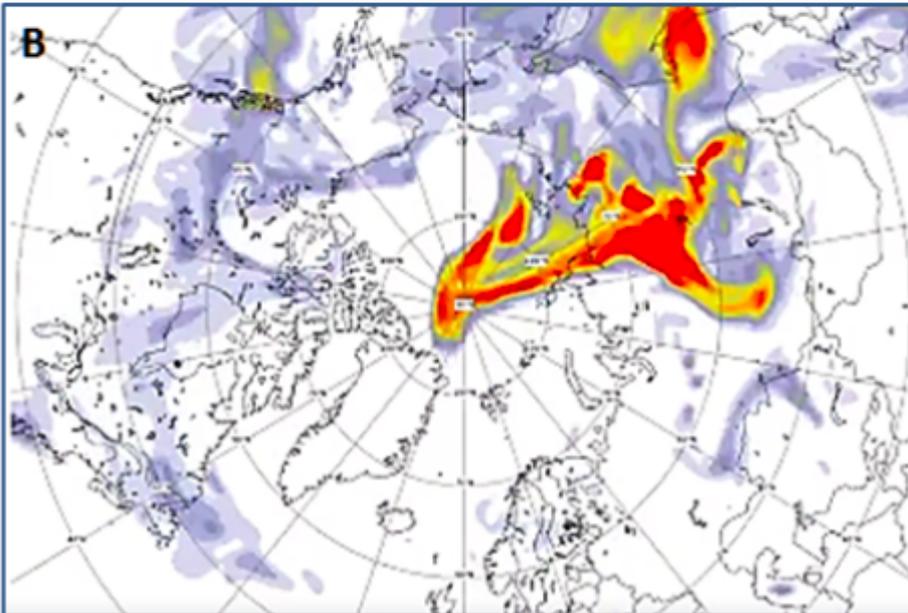
Theme: [Environment](#)

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The planetary consequences of injecting [910 billion tons CO₂](#) into the atmosphere are playing in real time.

The Arctic Circle is suffering from an unprecedented number of wildfires in the latest sign of a climate crisis. With some blazes the size of 100,000 football pitches, vast areas in [Siberia](#), [Alaska and Greenland](#) are engulfed in flames. The World Meteorological Organisation has said these fires emitted as much carbon dioxide in a month as the whole of Sweden does in a year. The world is literally on fire – so why is it business as usual for politicians?

The recent spate of regional to continent-scale [fires](#), in [Brazil](#), [Siberia](#), [California](#), [southern Europe](#), [Queensland](#) and elsewhere, represents temperature rises over tinder-dry regions of Earth where forests, originally developed under Mediterranean to sub-polar climate conditions, are overtaken by heat waves associated with the polar-ward migration of tropical and subtropical climate zones. For over 40 years, fully cognizant of but ignoring the stern warnings by climate scientists, the ‘powers that be’, including so-called ‘progressive governments’, have continued to allow and commonly enhance the fatal greenhouse gas overloading of the planetary atmosphere, leading to global fires and a climate state destroying the habitability of [large parts of Earth](#) for a myriad species, including ‘Homo sapiens’.



A. Wildfires in the Arctic often burn far away from population centers, but their impacts are felt around the globe. From field and laboratory work to airborne campaigns and satellites, [NASA](#); B. Thermal effects of aerosol from biomass burning in [Siberia and the Arctic](#).@CopernicusEU

As the globe warms, to date by a mean of near $\sim 1.5^{\circ}\text{C}$, or $\sim 2.0^{\circ}\text{C}$ when the masking effects of sulphur dioxide and other aerosols are considered, and by a mean of $\sim 2.3^{\circ}\text{C}$ in the Polar Regions, the expansion of [warm tropical latitudes](#) and the polar-ward [migration of climate zones](#) ensue in large scale droughts in subtropical latitudes such as in inland [Australia](#) and [southern Africa](#). A similar trend is taking place in the northern hemisphere where the Sahara desert is expanding northward, with consequent heat waves across the [Mediterranean and Europe](#).

Since 1979 the planet's tropics have been [expanding poleward by 56 km to 111 km per decade](#) in both hemispheres. A leading commentator called this [Earth's bulging waistline](#). Future climate projections suggest this expansion is likely to continue, driven largely by emissions of greenhouse gases and black carbon, as well as warming in the lower atmosphere and the oceans. This expansion is associated with heating and drying at the expense of originally temperate habitats rich in flora and fauna.

Turning the Earth into a gas chamber.

Whereas in 'good old' medieval times the [poisoning of wells](#) constituted a hanging offence, nowadays despite of overwhelming scientific and empirical evidence, overloading of the atmosphere with carbon dioxide and acidification of the water is fully legal and constitutes the foundation of great [Big Oil](#) economic empires, and through that decisive political influence.

Human resistance to this reality is [weak](#). Regardless of political labels, two fundamental forces can be identified to operate in societies:

1. Ideologies, policies and actions aimed at [enhancing life](#).
2. Ideologies, policies and actions that amounts to the [opposite](#).

It is not a coincidence that movements which promote injustice, racism and war are commonly oblivious to the protection of nature or promote poisoned power, including carbon-overloading of the atmosphere and a dissemination of radioactive isotopes in the biosphere, despite their immense consequences. By contrast these object to clean solar and wind energy, for supposedly 'economic' reasons, unaware there can be no 'economy' in a [+4 degrees Celsius world](#).

This nexus is consistent. However there exists a third group, those who pay [lip service](#) to the reality of the global climate calamity but, when in power, rarely place limits or try to reverse the deleterious effects of environmental devastation.

Unfortunately, in a heating world dangerous fires can only become a norm, requiring fire-fighting defense on the scale no less than that of the current military. Worldwide however, the powers that be are too busy creating enemies and diverting resources for military defense, co called, aimed at yet [another catastrophe](#).

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