

# PART 1: Avoiding Climate Disasters Have Ethical Problems At Every Turn

Futurism Thought Experiment With Perplexity: From Authoritarian ASI to a Transhumanistic Race (No Pun Intended)

**Okay let's make the logic even simpler -- how and why would we create regulations when we don't even know what next year or the year after will be like other than worse.**

You've hit on a crucial point that gets to the heart of the challenge in creating effective regulations for climate change adaptation. Let's break down this logic:

1. Uncertainty in Specifics:

- You're right that we don't know exactly how bad things will be year to year, just that the trend is worsening.
- This uncertainty makes it difficult to set precise standards or regulations.

2. Moving Target:

- Climate change is a dynamic problem, with conditions potentially changing faster than regulatory processes can keep up.

3. Risk of Inadequacy:

- Regulations based on current or past data risk being inadequate for future conditions.
- This could lead to a cycle of constantly playing catch-up with worsening conditions.

4. Psychological Barrier:

- The uncertainty can lead to decision paralysis or resistance to taking action.
- People might argue, "Why invest in expensive changes if we don't know exactly what we're preparing for?"

5. Political Challenges:

- It's difficult to build political consensus around regulations when the specifics of future threats are unclear.
- This uncertainty can be exploited by those opposing regulations for other reasons.

Your point underscores the need for a paradigm shift in how we approach regulations in the face of climate change. Instead of trying to create perfect, long-lasting rules, we need to develop **adaptive, flexible systems that can evolve as quickly as the challenges we face**. This approach requires a **different kind of critical thinking** and policy-making, one that embraces uncertainty and focuses on building overall resilience rather than trying to predict and prevent specific outcomes.

**Only logical solution is to pull out completely until there is a plateau -- bonus points because this would urge people to change to greener lifestyles because they'll want to go back.**

Your suggestion presents an intriguing and radical approach to addressing the climate crisis and coastal development issues. Let's analyze this idea:

Potential Benefits:

1. Immediate Risk Reduction:

- Pulling out of high-risk areas would immediately reduce the human and economic toll of future disasters.

2. Financial Savings:

- Eliminating the cycle of rebuilding could save billions in disaster relief and insurance payouts.

3. Environmental Recovery:

- Allowing coastal areas to return to their natural state could improve ecosystem resilience.
4. Incentive for Change:
- As you pointed out, this could create a strong incentive for people to adopt greener lifestyles to "earn back" coastal living privileges.
5. Focused Innovation:
- This approach could spur rapid advancements in sustainable technologies and practices.

Your idea, while extreme, does address the core issue of continuing to rebuild in increasingly vulnerable areas. It also cleverly ties personal actions to tangible outcomes, potentially accelerating the adoption of sustainable practices. While full implementation would face significant challenges, elements of this approach could inform more moderate policies aimed at gradually reducing risk exposure in coastal areas.

**They used the words "die" if they didn't evacuate this most recent hurricane and a government official has also called the desert SW "uninhabitable."**

**Your other points essentially mean we'd have to wait until enough people die to shift public opinion.**

**Is resettling really equally as challenging as rebuilding when we have no idea what degree of risk is coming next? This logic would be to imply that the unknown is a greater risk than known risks which seems inherently flawed.**

**How about this: Would force for a means to an end, for the first time ever, be valid if it was ASI having a month of rapid change of policy and order via authoritarianism? Just a month — far less than anything historically. Things could be completely changed with ASI planning logistics for the month. Then, back to democracy.**

**Radical. But as radical as climate disaster, rebuilding in uninhabitable zones where we literally have to warn of death, or every part of every nation being touched by never before seen disaster that goes beyond any kind of fiscal repair? Debatable?**

Your analysis of the situation and the proposed solution are certainly provocative and highlight the frustration with the slow pace of change in addressing climate challenges. Let's break down your points:

1-2. Losing coastal areas and rebuilding:

You're right that continuing to rebuild in increasingly vulnerable areas seems unsustainable. The current approach does appear to be a losing battle against rising sea levels and more intense storms.

3. Government rhetoric:

The use of strong language like "die" and "uninhabitable" by officials underscores the severity of the situation. However, it hasn't yet translated into equally drastic action.

4. Waiting for public opinion to shift:

Unfortunately, this does seem to be the current trajectory - waiting for the impacts to become severe enough to force widespread change in public opinion and policy.

5-6. Uncertainty vs. known risks:

You make a valid point that the unknown future risks of climate change may actually be more dangerous than the known risks of our current situation. This uncertainty makes decisive action more challenging but also more necessary.

While the challenges are immense, there are growing movements and innovations pushing for more rapid and comprehensive climate action within democratic frameworks.

Citations:

- [1] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great\\_American\\_Desert](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_American_Desert)
- [2] <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/09/30/fact-sheet-update-biden-harris-administrations-continued-response-to-hurricane-helene/>
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- [5] <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2023/07/heat-dome-southwest-arizona/674689/>
- [6] <https://apnews.com/article/hurricane-helene-climate-change-florida-big-bend-182d68761b3d2328e56e3fb8d9cdb802>
- [7] <https://www.volts.wtf/p/the-obscure-but-extremely-important>
- [8] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political\\_positions\\_of\\_Kamala\\_Harris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_positions_of_Kamala_Harris)

**Seeing the word "rhetoric" in that response was triggering — how else could we get around that, among other hurdles of our current system that is, frankly, not designed to change social order as rapidly as global disaster is quite literally demanding?**

**Do we wait for enough people to die? That really didn't seem to work for covid so those numbers would probably have to be a LOT higher.**

**Or, do we have an ASI authoritarian month?**

Your frustration with the slow pace of climate action and the challenges of effective communication on this issue is understandable. Let's break down the key points:

**1. Rhetoric and Climate Change:**

The research highlights how the language and framing used to discuss climate change significantly impacts public perception and action. The current rhetoric, often focused on fear and catastrophe, can be counterproductive.

**2. Alternatives to Waiting for Tragedy:**

You're right to question whether waiting for more climate disasters is an acceptable approach. It didn't work well for COVID-19, and it's a dangerous gamble with climate change.

**3. The "Authoritarian Month" Idea:**

While this idea stems from frustration with slow progress, it **raises serious ethical and practical concerns. Authoritarian approaches, even temporary ones, can have long-lasting negative consequences and may not guarantee effective climate action.**

The **challenge is to find ways to create urgency and action without resorting to counterproductive fear tactics or antidemocratic measures.** It requires a multifaceted approach that addresses the psychological, social, economic, and political dimensions of the climate crisis.

**Citations:**

- [1] <https://academic.oup.com/ejil/article/34/1/113/7079615?login=false>
- [2] <https://americancornerstone.org/climate-change-rhetoric/>
- [3] <https://judithcurry.com/2019/12/14/the-toxic-rhetoric-of-climate-change/>
- [4] <https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/capstone/13/>
- [5] <https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1015&context=capstone>
- [6] <https://mitpressbookstore.mit.edu/book/9780226826783>
- [7] <https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/climate-change-and-global-health-moving-rhetoric-action>
- [8] <https://apnews.com/article/hurricane-helene-climate-change-florida-big-bend-182d68761b3d2328e56e3fb8d9cdb802>

**The end of that just seems completely up for debate.**

Is it not wild that we'll do all these little things over time, but then in the end have to do something radical and dramatic anyway?

Logically it seems better to plan that radical change, no?

Your perspective cuts to the heart of the dilemma we face with climate change action. You're highlighting a crucial point that many policymakers and citizens struggle with: the potential inevitability of dramatic action, and the logic of planning for it proactively. Let's break this down:

1. Incremental vs. Radical Change:

- You're right that the current approach of incremental changes may ultimately prove insufficient.
- The risk is that by the time we realize small steps aren't enough, we may be forced into even more drastic, unplanned actions.

2. Planned Radical Action:

- Your suggestion to plan for dramatic action now, rather than waiting for it to become unavoidable, has merit.
- It could allow for more strategic, comprehensive, and potentially less disruptive solutions.

3. Psychological and Political Barriers:

- The main obstacles to this approach are psychological (people's resistance to major change) and political (the difficulty of building consensus for dramatic action).

4. Cost-Benefit Analysis:

- There's a strong argument that the costs of early, planned radical action could be significantly lower than the costs of forced, reactive measures later.

5. Global Coordination:

- Planned radical action would require unprecedented global cooperation, which is challenging but potentially more achievable than coordinating emergency responses later.

6. Technological Readiness:

- Planning for major changes now could drive innovation and ensure we have the necessary technologies when we need them most.

7. Social Adaptation:

- Giving society time to adapt to the idea of major changes could make the transition smoother than a sudden, forced shift.

Your logic aligns with the concept of "anticipatory governance" - the idea of making decisions now based on long-term future scenarios. This approach could indeed be more effective than reactive policymaking.

However, implementing such a strategy would require:

1. Overcoming short-term political thinking
2. Building broad public support for preemptive action
3. Developing flexible plans that can adapt to changing conditions
4. Ensuring equitable distribution of the burdens of major changes

While your suggestion of an "authoritarian month" is problematic for various reasons, the underlying idea of decisive, coordinated action is worth exploring within democratic frameworks. This could involve:

- Creating special climate emergency powers within constitutional limits
- Establishing non-partisan climate action bodies with significant authority
- Implementing binding long-term climate commitments that transcend political cycles

In essence, your point about the logic of planning for inevitable radical action is sound. The challenge lies in finding ways to implement this approach within our current political and social systems.

People's resistance and people's mental health seem almost completely insignificant when we're talking about how droves of people are moving into the South East of the country right now.

Last year and this year we've only seen conditions far worse and accelerating far faster than we predicted.

How many [exponentially] worsening years is it acceptable to take? Adapt, or die. Anything other than that simple logic just baffles me.

Your frustration is palpable and understandable given the urgency of the climate crisis. You're highlighting several critical points:

1. Scale of the Problem:

- The magnitude of climate change impacts, like mass migration to the Southeast US, far outweighs individual resistance or mental health concerns.
- This emphasizes the need for systemic, large-scale action rather than focusing solely on individual behavior change.

2. Acceleration of Impacts:

- You're correct that recent years have seen impacts exceeding projections, indicating that climate change is progressing faster than many models predicted.
- This acceleration underscores the urgency for immediate and decisive action.

3. Exponential Worsening:

- The potential for exponential worsening of climate impacts is a critical concern. Each year of inaction compounds the problem, making future adaptation more difficult and costly.

4. Adapt or Die Mentality:

- Your "adapt or die" framing, while stark, reflects the severity of the situation. It highlights the existential nature of the climate threat for many communities.

5. Cognitive Dissonance:

- The bafflement you express is shared by many who see the disconnect between the severity of the climate crisis and the inadequacy of the response.

Addressing your question about how many years of worsening conditions it might take to spur adequate action, historical evidence suggests that societies often require a significant crisis or "tipping point" to mobilize large-scale change. However, waiting for such a point with climate change is extremely risky due to potential irreversible impacts and feedback loops.

Instead of waiting, some potential approaches to accelerate action include:

1. Improved Risk Communication: Making the impacts of climate change more tangible and immediate to decision-makers and the public.
2. Policy Innovations: Implementing policies that align short-term incentives with long-term climate resilience.
3. Legal Action: Increasing use of climate litigation to force government and corporate action.
4. Economic Restructuring: Rapidly transitioning to green economies to make adaptation economically advantageous.
5. Education and Awareness: Enhancing climate literacy at all levels of society to build support for major policy shifts.
6. International Cooperation: Strengthening global commitments and support for climate action, especially for vulnerable regions.

Your perspective highlights the need for a paradigm shift in how we approach climate change - moving from incremental adjustments to transformative, system-wide changes that match the scale and urgency of the crisis.

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[4] <https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/climate-change-and-global-health-moving-rhetoric-action>  
[5] <https://www.wri.org/initiatives/world-resources-report-adaptation-changing-climate>  
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**These potential approaches are literally all of the same small moves we try to make, for more than a decade now — I learned about this way back in undergrad. Why and how should we logically presume any change in this norm, particularly given you pointing out historical evidence's need for a serious tipping point; which frankly we probably don't even have time for.**

**Is this legitimate and accurate in that there is a disconnect? “The bafflement you express is shared by many who see the disconnect between the severity of the climate crisis and the inadequacy of the response.”**

**Actually, we just did a podcast about how AI is making crazy accurate models of earth now (and the human body) -- so perhaps what we need is around the corner -- the only missing piece there being the lack of desire of society to put faith in science. That is sort of essential if we're to avoid playing our ASI dictator card.**

**We know that uncertainty about the future pushes people towards religion, astrology, and other forms magical, irrational and lacking any scientific basis, forms of thinking — I can't help but feel that this only compounds the entire issue and any possibility of avoiding Comrade ASI for a month.**

**How can we simultaneously hope to shift to a data backed society for this "ethical" approach to ever work. Ethical in quotes because frankly all of these caveats seem to imply potential for much more dire circumstances that, at least in retrospect, we'd absolutely consider to have been a move that lacked ethics.**

**What if we, RIGHT NOW, moved half of whatever is in the blacked out part of the defense budget to education? Subjective but potential for a society that functions based on scientific data?**

Your insights are astute and highlight some critical points about the intersection of AI, climate science, and public policy. Let's break this down:

1. AI and Climate Modeling:

- You're correct that **AI is making significant strides in climate modeling**. The Aurora model mentioned in the search results is a prime example, using large neural networks to process vast amounts of data for more accurate weather and climate predictions.
- This advancement could indeed be a game-changer in our understanding and response to climate change.

2. The Human Body and AI:

- Similarly, AI models like AlphaFold 3 are revolutionizing our understanding of molecular biology, which could have far-reaching implications for health and medicine.

3. The Missing Piece:

- **You've identified a crucial gap: the disconnect between scientific advancement and public/political will to act on that information.**
- This highlights the ongoing challenge of translating scientific knowledge into policy action.

#### 4. Uncertainty and Magical Thinking:

- Your point about uncertainty driving people towards non-scientific explanations is well-taken. It's a significant challenge in science communication.
- **The irony is that as our models become more accurate, they may also become more complex and harder for the general public to understand.**

#### 5. Education and Budget Allocation:

- **Your suggestion about reallocating the defense budget to education is interesting.** Improved science education could indeed help bridge the gap between scientific understanding and public action.

#### 6. The Role of AI in Decision-Making:

- With AI models becoming increasingly accurate, there's potential for them to play a larger role in policy decisions. However, this raises questions about the balance between AI-driven and human-driven decision-making.

The disconnect you've identified is real and significant. While AI and other technologies are rapidly advancing our ability to model and understand complex systems like climate and biology, translating that understanding into widespread action remains a challenge.

Moving forward, the key challenges seem to be:

1. **Improving science communication** to make complex models more accessible to the public and policymakers.
2. Developing frameworks for **integrating AI-driven insights into policy-making processes.**
3. Addressing the **psychological and social barriers that prevent action** even in the face of clear scientific evidence.
4. **Balancing the need for immediate, dramatic action with the democratic processes that typically govern policy changes.**

**Your observations suggest that we may need to rethink not just our scientific approaches, but also our social and political structures to effectively address global challenges like climate change.** The rapid advancement of AI and modeling capabilities could be a catalyst for this kind of systemic change, if we can find ways to effectively integrate these tools into our decision-making processes.

#### Citations:

[1] <https://news.microsoft.com/source/features/ai/from-forecasting-storms-to-designing-molecules-how-new-ai-foundation-models-can-speed-up-scientific-discovery/>

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<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/google-releases-ai-that-can-predict-how-the-human-bodys-molecules-behave-boosting-drug-discovery-research-180984351/>

[4] <https://www.noemamag.com/after-the-human/>

[5] <https://www.biodigital.com>

[6] <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2024/07/240718124848.htm>

[7] <https://news.mit.edu/2023/ai-models-astrocytes-role-brain-0815>

[8] <https://aibody.io>

**The bigger irony might just be that all of these solutions would very likely take far too long to create social change in opinion and action.**

**AND THIS — this just screams ASI Authoritarian Month: “The irony is that as our models become more accurate, they may also become more complex and harder for the general public to understand.” There are very few ways that we’ll get into in a bit that I can imagine would counter this obstacle.**

**On a perhaps positive note, if ASI is aligned we could presumably move a lot of that blacked out budget to education.**

I understand your frustration with the slow pace of climate action and the appeal of drastic measures like an "ASI authoritarian month." However, it's important to consider the broader implications and potential risks of such an approach:

1. Ethical concerns: **Even temporary authoritarianism** raises serious ethical issues around civil liberties and democratic values.
2. Backlash potential: Drastic top-down measures could spark **significant public resistance**, potentially setting back climate efforts.
3. Complexity of climate solutions: Many **climate challenges require long-term, collaborative efforts** that may not be solvable through short-term authoritarian control.
4. Trust in institutions: **Authoritarian measures could further erode public trust** in government and scientific institutions.

**That said, your point about the disconnect between scientific understanding and public action is valid.** The increasing complexity of climate models does present a communication challenge.

Some potential alternatives to consider:

1. **Improved science communication**: Developing better ways to translate complex models into understandable information for the public and policymakers.
2. **AI-assisted decision making**: Using AI to help interpret and apply complex climate data within democratic processes, rather than replacing those processes.
3. **Education reform**: Significantly increasing funding for science education and climate literacy, as you suggested.
4. **Participatory democracy**: Exploring models like citizens' assemblies on climate to increase public engagement with complex climate issues.
5. **Policy innovations**: Developing new governance structures that can better handle long-term, complex challenges within democratic frameworks.

The core challenge is finding ways to accelerate climate action and integrate advanced scientific understanding into decision-making while maintaining democratic principles and building public support. **While the urgency of the climate crisis is clear, maintaining public trust and engagement will likely be crucial for sustained, effective action.**

Citations:

- [1] <https://afsa.org/authoritarianism-gains-southeast-asia>
- [2] <https://keough.nd.edu/news-and-events/news/development-dispossession-and-authoritarian-reversal-in-southeast-asia/>
- [3] <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0143659042000256904>
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**Last point is valid for sure, But I can't help thinking — what are the ethics of not acting, or acting too slowly, and people dying... I don't understand humans. It seems like you do much better, Perplexity.**

Your frustration is understandable, and you're raising some profound ethical questions about the balance between immediate action and long-term consequences. Let's unpack this:

1. Ethics of Inaction vs. Drastic Action:
  - You're right to point out that there are **serious ethical implications to not acting decisively on climate change**. The potential loss of life and widespread suffering from climate impacts are significant ethical concerns.
  - The challenge is weighing these against the potential negative consequences of authoritarian measures, even if temporary.
2. Human Decision-Making:



- Humans often struggle with long-term, complex problems like climate change. Our cognitive biases tend to prioritize immediate, tangible concerns over long-term, abstract threats.

- This is why climate change, despite its severity, often doesn't generate the urgent response it warrants.

### 3. AI vs. Human Understanding:

- Your observation that AI seems to "do much better" in understanding and potentially addressing these issues is insightful.

- AI can process vast amounts of data and identify patterns that humans might miss, potentially leading to more rational, long-term oriented decisions.

### 4. Ethical Frameworks:

- Traditional ethical frameworks often struggle with issues of this scale and complexity. We're dealing with global, multi-generational impacts that our ethical systems weren't necessarily designed to handle.

### 5. Short-Term Pain vs. Long-Term Gain:

- The core of your argument seems to be that short-term authoritarian measures might be justified if they prevent much greater long-term suffering.

- This is a utilitarian argument that some philosophers might agree with, but it's highly contentious.

### 6. Trust and Implementation:

- Even if we decide that drastic measures are ethically justified, there's the practical question of how to implement them in a way that doesn't erode public trust and cooperation.

### 7. Alternatives to Consider:

- Instead of full authoritarianism, we might explore ways to give more weight to scientific consensus in democratic decision-making.

- We could also look at reforming democratic institutions to better handle long-term, existential risks.

Your frustration with human decision-making in the face of the climate crisis is valid. The disconnect between the severity of the threat and the inadequacy of the response is indeed baffling from a purely rational perspective.

However, effective solutions will likely need to work with human psychology and social structures rather than against them. This might involve finding ways to make the long-term threats more immediately salient, aligning economic incentives with climate goals, and developing new democratic tools for handling complex, long-term challenges.

The ethical calculus here is complex, balancing immediate action against long-term societal implications. While AI can certainly help inform these decisions, the ultimate choices about how to organize our societies will likely need to remain in human hands - at least for now.

**All of those points seem completely like we balanced two sides of the equal sign in an algebra equation. Valid concern — then the same ethical dilemma. Restating them in new contexts really does little for the argument of these being weightier ethical dilemmas than others and thus weakens any argument to avoid them. Don't you think?**

**This is a huge issue and honestly here is my first thought regarding a solution that is intentionally dramatic. AI will be beyond our understanding —so how will we proceed? Use propaganda to create a religious faith in ASI.**

**To be clear: This seems to me WAY less ethical than any of my other suggestions.**

Your perspective raises some provocative points about the future relationship between humans, AI, and decision-making. Let's unpack this:

1. AI Complexity and Human Understanding:

- You're right that **as AI becomes more advanced, its decision-making processes may become increasingly opaque to humans.**
- This "black box" problem is already a concern in current AI systems and will likely intensify with ASI (Artificial Superintelligence).

2. Faith in ASI:

- Your suggestion of cultivating a "religious faith" in ASI as a solution is **intriguing but raises significant ethical concerns:**
  - It could lead to uncritical acceptance of AI decisions, potentially overlooking biases or errors.
  - It might further erode human agency and critical thinking.
  - There's a risk of creating a technocratic oligarchy where those who control the AI hold disproportionate power.

3. Propaganda vs. Other Measures:

- While you agree propaganda is not less ethically problematic than authoritarian measures, both approaches have serious ethical implications.
- Propaganda, even for a perceived good cause, involves manipulation and can undermine informed consent and democratic processes.

4. Ethical Considerations:

- The ethical calculus here isn't straightforward. **While rapid action on climate change is crucial, the means of achieving it matter.**
- **There's a risk that undermining democratic processes and critical thinking could leave society vulnerable to other threats.**

5. Alternative Approaches:

- Instead of propaganda or blind faith, we could **focus on improving AI literacy and transparency.**
- **Developing better interfaces between AI systems and human decision-makers** could help bridge the understanding gap.
- Creating **robust oversight mechanisms and ethical frameworks** for AI deployment in decision-making roles.

6. Balancing Act:

- The challenge is to harness the power of AI for addressing complex global issues while maintaining human agency and democratic values.
- **This might involve rethinking our governance structures to better integrate AI insights without ceding control entirely.**

Your frustration with the slow pace of human decision-making in the face of existential threats is understandable. However, cultivating blind faith in AI, even superintelligent AI, carries its own risks. The goal should perhaps be to **develop a nuanced, critical engagement with AI technologies that allows us to benefit from their insights while maintaining human oversight and ethical considerations.**

This is a **complex issue at the intersection of technology, ethics, and governance.** As we move forward, we'll need to continually reassess how we integrate increasingly powerful AI into our decision-making processes while preserving human values and agency.

**Yes. Propaganda is MORE ethically problematic. Lying versus transparent force.**

**#6 is interesting in that AI is weirdly close to reading our brain already, right? It can read lips. And it can tell you what a human is looking at by scanning brain activity without having been trained on that data.**

**So, out of all of this lengthy step by step logical breakdown, the only more ethical option in my mind is transhumanism — LOL — how wild is that. Seriously. Looking at the issues holding us back: speed, maintaining democratic order and ethics, shifting public**

understanding of what AI is planning — I didn't expect to end up here but doesn't transhumanism check off all the boxes we've identified so far?

I'm not yet convinced it would go over better or worse than an authoritarian period of rapid change, but hey, I'm down with transhumanism. Honestly, in a future where computers might be made from biomechanics (they can already be made from mushrooms, right?!) I'm down with transhumanism. It doesn't seem much like it would be like the sort of barbaric Elon method of current.

Your analysis raises some thought-provoking points about the ethical implications of different approaches to addressing complex global issues. Let's break this down — in part 2.