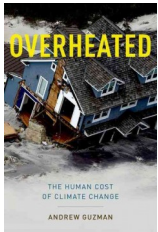


Overheated: the Human Cost of Climate Change

Our Changing Planet



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It's Earth Day. Senator Gaylord Nelson was the driving force behind the first one which occurred in 1970 as a day of education about environmental issues. As I scanned the new releases in the environmental section, this book caught my eye. It was a sobering read but one that was very thought-provoking. World-renowned legal scholar, Andrew Guzman, wrote *Overheated*. In it, he examines the political and sociological changes from climate change that the author reports have already started to occur. Not just flooding and mega-storms, but also droughts, food scarcity, refugees forced from their land, lack of water for agriculture, etc. In his preface, the author states that "climate change will affect nearly everyone on this planet."

The chapter topics reveal his major concerns: one on flooding shows how some island nations will disappear, and that at least one very populated one - Bangladesh - will suffer massive flooding that will lead to migrations of millions of refugees. The chapter entitled "A Thirsty World" depicts how the melting of glaciers will affect the water supply of many people on earth, not only in India, Pakistan, Argentina, and Chile, but also in our American West. He predicts that this will impact both our food supply and the prices of commodities.

In "Climate Wars: A Shower of Sparks" he hypothesizes how the conflict in Darfur in the 1990s may have been the first war sparked by climate change. Guzman also says that more wars will be caused by a scarcity of resources. He is very concerned about the Middle East, already one of the most arid areas in the world.

In one of the closing chapters "Climate Change is Bad for Your Health" he discusses how disruptions in water supplies and food and the migrations of huge numbers of refugees will spark serious diseases, not just the spread of malaria and dengue fever but also deadly types of flu. He describes how governments will need to divert money from public health to deal with these problems. In this chapter, Guzman also states that climate change will "nickel and dime us to death." Another frightening example he gives is that the number of heat waves will increase: in the Los Angeles area alone they are predicted to go up from the current average of twelve days a year to forty-four by the year 2050.

His last chapter "Where Do We Go from Here" lists some positive steps that we can take to deal with climate change. This is not an optimistic book in any sense, but one that reasonably lists facts and figures to present a view of a future that we may not want to face but one that Guzman insists is already happening.

If you'd like to know more about how the first Earth Day happened and its impact, try Adam Rome's *The Genius of Earth Day: How a 1970 Teach-In Unexpectedly Made the First Green Generation*.

Posted by Dory L. on April 22, 2013

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