



## Plan B: Mobilizing to Save Civilization



### Introduction

*"Lester Brown tells us how to build a more just world and save the planet...in a practical, straightforward way. We should all heed his advice."*

— President Bill Clinton

Featuring environmental visionary Lester Brown, "Plan B: Mobilizing To Save Civilization" delivers a clear and unflinching message – either confront the realities of climate change or suffer the consequences of lost civilizations and failed political states.

"Plan B" is the 12th episode of the award-winning PBS series Journey to Planet Earth and it spans the globe — from China, Japan, Korea, India, Italy, Turkey, Bangladesh, Zambia, Haiti, and the United States — to explore new ideas in solving the challenges of global climate change. Featuring some of the world's most original and influential thinkers, "Plan B" provides audiences with a glimpse into a new and emerging economy based on renewable energy sources plus realistic strategies to avoid the growing threat of global warming. Appearing with Lester Brown are Nobel Laureate Paul Krugman, Pulitzer Prize-winner Tom Friedman, former Governor and Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt, along with other scholars and scientists.

What makes "Plan B" significant and timely is that it provides audiences with hopeful solutions — a road map that will help eradicate poverty, stabilize population, stabilize climate, and protect and restore the earth's forests, soils and fisheries. It includes ways of protecting and restoring soils, forests, rangelands, and oceanic fisheries, plus conserving the earth's biological diversity. It also features case studies that clearly show signs of a new energy economy emerging.



In the end, “Plan B” will make a strong case for choosing new economic and environmental priorities and developing new responses to the challenges associated with growing populations. It will talk directly to political leaders who need to understand the relationship between the economy and its environmental support systems. It will explain to economists why they must begin to think like ecologists. And it will motivate community leaders and the general public to become part of a solution that seeks to restructure the economy so that it can sustain economic progress.



***Explore the program chapters:***

- Distress Signals from 35,000 Feet
  - Disappearing glaciers and an exploding Chinese grain market could mean millions go hungry.
- Who Will Feed China?
  - When densely populated countries, like China, industrialize, factories and roads displace farmland forcing an increase in food imports in order to feed its population.
- A Road Trip
  - It is clear that “Plan A” (i.e., “business as usual”) is no longer a viable option. There's a real sense of urgency now to move the economy in a carbon-free direction.
- Ancient Civilizations
  - Rising incomes trigger food shortages as more people aspire to an “American lifestyle.”
- Meat... Milk... and Eggs...
  - As the world’s appetite for meat, dairy, and eggs dairy products grows, it puts more and more stress on the land because you have to produce the food not just for the people but for the animals that produce those other kinds of foods.
- Failing States
  - When governments can’t provide personal and food security, frustration leads to violence.
- The Economic Truth
  - Despite the risks of carbon emissions, governments have lacked incentives to curb them.
- The 29th Day
  - The tipping point for the planet environmentally is the 30th Day. We are well into the 29th Day. We’re on an accelerating curve of climate change and running out of time to cope with a rapidly warming planet.



- Plan B
  - Plan B has four components: 1) cut carbon emissions 80% by 2020; 2) stabilize population at no more than 8 billion; 3) eradicate poverty; and 4) restore the Earth's natural systems – that includes forests, soils, grasslands, aquifers, and fisheries.
- Poverty...Population...And the Diversity of Life
  - Education, micro-credit, and modern farming techniques help break the cycle of poverty.
- Reducing CO2 Emissions
  - In a world dependent of fossil fuels, economic barriers remain to adopting cleaner fuels.
- The New Energy Economy
  - Wind and solar projects are leading the way to new technologies to harness clean energy.
- Can We Change Fast Enough?
  - Can War World II provide a historical model for mobilizing to prevent climate change?
- Saving Civilization is Not a Spectator Sport
  - As environmental challenges loom, Lester Brown explains why saving civilization "is not a spectator sport."



### ***Points of View:***

#### **Tom Friedman, author of Hot, Flat and Crowded**

The big issue on the planet is not just the fact that we're going from 6.7 billion people today to 9.2 billion. It's the number of people living an American lifestyle, eating American-sized Big Macs, living in American-sized houses, driving American-sized cars, on American-sized highways

#### **Thomas Homer-Dixon, University of Waterloo**

You have to think of environmental stress as kind of an underlying pressure, an almost tectonic stress within the society that increases the likelihood of violence but doesn't necessarily cause it by itself. It has to come with other things such as weak governments, availability of weapons, and also deep ethnic cleavages within a society that can make violence more likely. And then all of a sudden, you get a dramatic outbreak of riots in the streets.

#### **Steve Osofsky, Wildlife Conservation Society**

In the face of poverty people will tend to utilize whatever they can to survive. Our job as conservationists is to try and create an environment where sustainable management is possible, where people can see things from a larger scale and learn how to manage things not just at the household level but work collaboratively to manage things at a landscape level.



**Helen Gayle, Care USA**

If you educate a girl she is more likely to marry later, have fewer children, and her children are more likely to get an education. And so you really create a virtuous cycle that starts by changing the life of a girl who becomes a woman and having an impact on whole communities

**Bruce Babbitt, Former Secretary of the Interior**

I'm really encouraged by the fact that when I go to my hometown in Arizona — a small town of 50,000 people — candidates for local office are debating climate change. They are asking and taking positions now as to what should be done in county government to move toward alternative energy. Those debates are happening everywhere clear down to the grassroots in a wonderfully positive way that will yield national change.

**Lester Brown, author of Plan B: Mobilizing To Save Civilization**

These are the questions we're facing as a civilization. And my final point would be this — saving civilization is not a spectator sport. We all need to get involved.

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