

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN TO SAVE CIVILIZATION BY 2025

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**TRANSHUMANIST
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PUTTING SCIENCE, HEALTH, & TECHNOLOGY
AT THE FOREFRONT OF AMERICAN POLITICS



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Civilization Did Not End in 2022.

We were fortunate!

However, there were multiple close calls.

Moreover, now is not the time to relax.

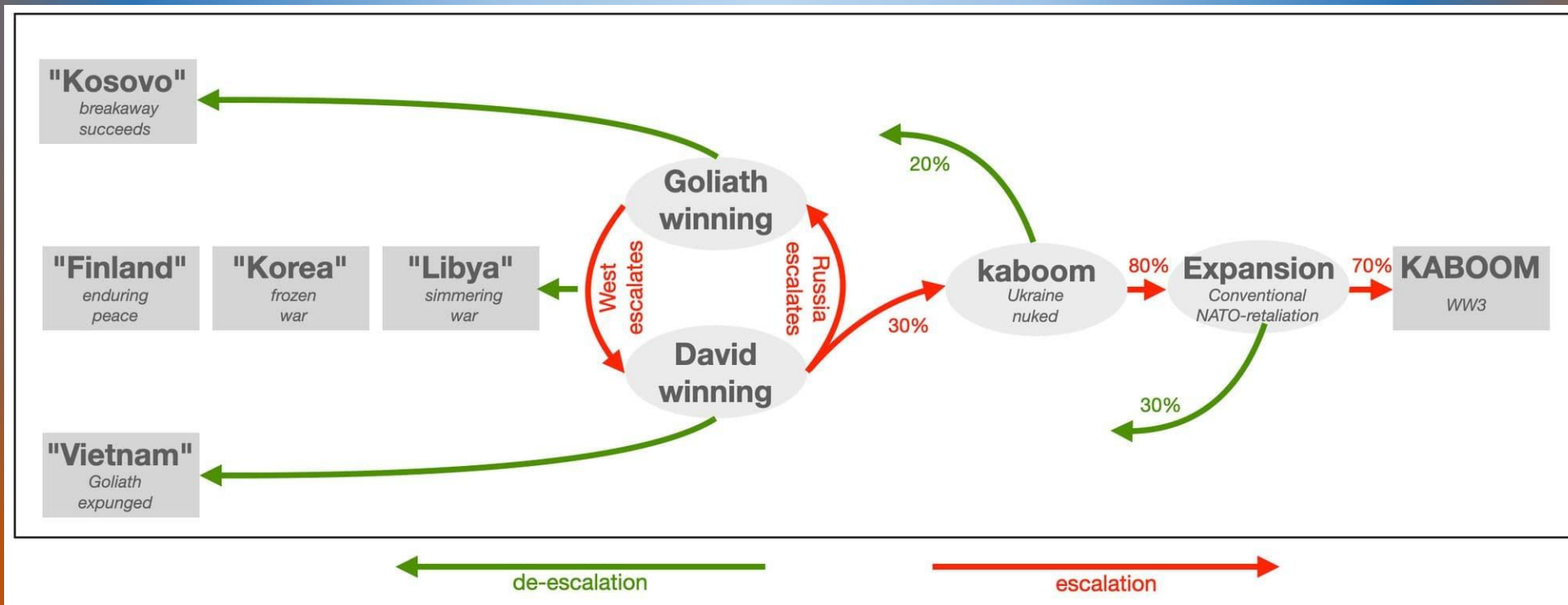
We are not out of the Great Filter yet.



October – November 2022: Peak Existential Risk

- **October 7, 2022:** Max Tegmark (Future of Life Institute) publishes an article on LessWrong, “Why I think there’s a one-in-six chance of an imminent global nuclear war”:
- (30% probability of tactical nuclear strike) * (80% probability of forceful NATO Response) * (70% probability of rapid escalation after Russian counterstrikes) = **16.8% probability of nuclear war at the time.**

<https://www.lesswrong.com/posts/Dod9AWz8Rp4Svdpof/why-i-think-there-s-a-one-in-six-chance-of-an-imminent>





The Most Existentially Dangerous Day in Human History

The most existentially dangerous day in human history was **November 15, 2022**.

An errant Ukrainian missile struck the village of Przewodów on the Polish side of the Polish-Ukrainian border, killing two people.

Many Western / U.S. and Eastern European commentators were quick to blame Russia and call for activation of Article 5 of the NATO Treaty.

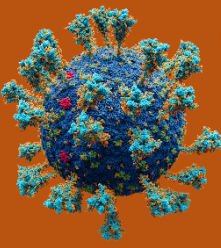
Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed, and the Biden Administration conducted an objective investigation, avoiding escalation and wider war.



Town Sign at the Entrance to Przewodów, Poland –
Photograph by Kruczjak

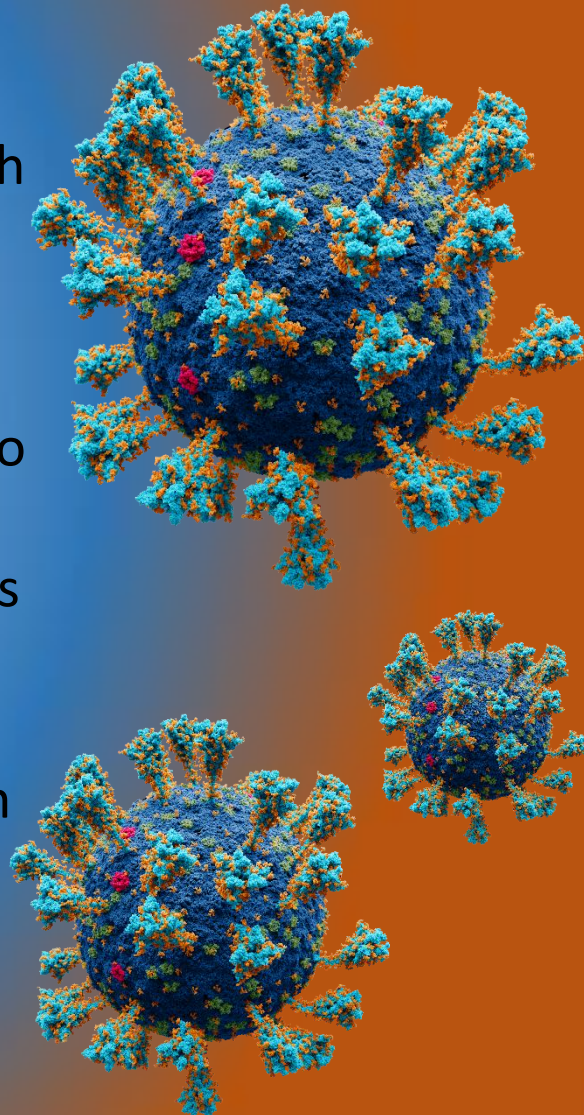


Why Did We Enter the Great Filter?



COVID:

- Led Putin to isolate himself, reject feedback from all except his inner circle \Rightarrow massive miscalculation in decision to invade Ukraine.
- Created a situation where human life became devalued because of mass death and blithe public acceptance. **Casualties in Ukraine have been an order of magnitude lower than COVID deaths in the United States alone!**
- **Disrupted supply chains** and led to **mass shortages** of goods and **inflation**, as well as **scarcity of labor**, **normalizing suffering** and leading Western populations to tolerate further deprivation much more.
- Fueled **domestic unrest** on both the Left and the Right, leading the ruling class to seek to distract the populace with war.
- Entrenched **zero-sum thinking** because of the trade-offs involved in responding to the pandemic. **Normalized acceptance of "collateral damage"** from policy decisions more broadly. Hence major powers' politicians do not care that innocent civilians die from this war.
- **Major stresses to ordinary people** in coping with the pandemic \Rightarrow less time and energy to organize protest movements against war involvement.





Is COVID the Antonine Plague of Modernity?

- COVID is not itself an existential risk, but it increases the probability of other existential risks.
- **The 2020s would have been extremely hopeful**, were it not for COVID. The dominant narrative would have been technological progress, and improvements in everyday life would have reduced the appetite for political partisanship and warmongering.
- The Antonine Plague of 165-180 CE set the Roman Empire on a course of irreversible decline, since Rome never fully recovered from the devastation of the plague.
- **Unless COVID is eradicated or rendered harmless**, best-case scenario is a gradual, centuries-long decline with periodic crises; perhaps a new Dark Age by 2450. Worst-case scenario is that societal and political institutions are damaged so much in the short term that a mere misunderstanding causes nuclear war because institutional safeguards have been eroded.





Hope Against COVID: A Universal Antibody

Article from Duke Medical School – July 27, 2023:

“Newly-discovered antibodies can neutralise COVID-19 variants, potentially prevent future coronavirus outbreaks”

<https://www.duke-nus.edu.sg/allnews/newly-discovered-antibodies-can-neutralise-covid-19-variants>

Singapore, 27 July 2023 – Exceptionally potent antibodies that can neutralise virtually all known variants of the COVID-19 virus—including Omicron, as well as other dangerous animal coronaviruses that could potentially cause future outbreaks—have been discovered in a new study just published in *Science Advances*.

The international team led by Duke-NUS Medical School, with scientists from the National University of Singapore, the University of Melbourne in Australia and the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in the United States, isolated antibodies from the blood of a recovered SARS patient who was thereafter vaccinated against COVID-19. This unique combination of prior coronavirus infection and vaccination generated an extremely broad and powerful antibody response capable of stopping nearly all related coronaviruses tested.

The most powerful antibody, named E7, neutralised both SARS-CoV and SARS-CoV-2 sarbecoviruses, animal sarbecoviruses and newly emerged SARS-CoV-2 variants, such as Omicron XBB.1.16. It was shown to neutralise via a unique mechanism of binding that bridges two parts of the coronavirus’ spike protein that it uses to invade cells. This appears to lock the spike in an inactive conformation and block the shape-shifting process the virus requires to infect cells and cause illness.

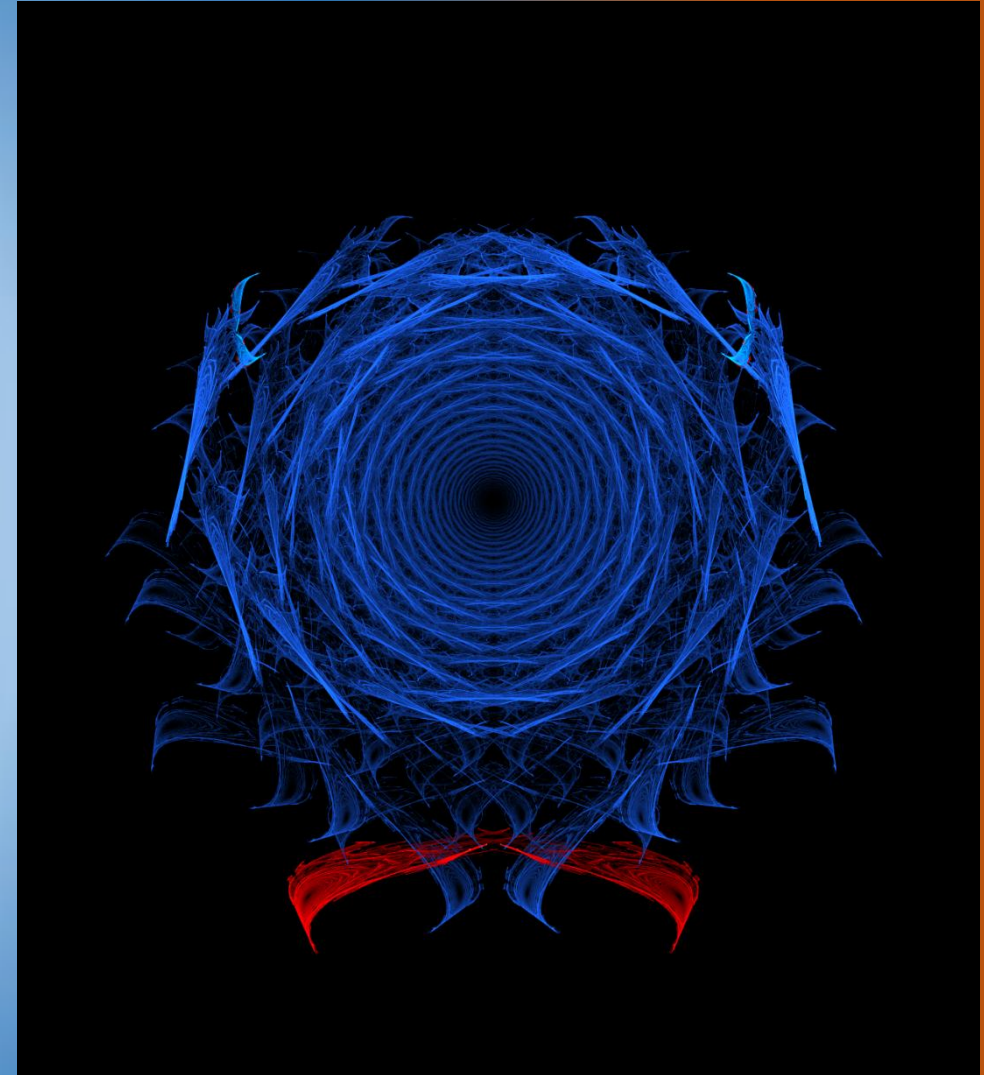


Duration of the Great Filter

- The COVID-19 pandemic began in November 2019.
- If the midpoint of the Great Filter was July 2022, then we *might* be able to emerge from it by **March 2025**.
- **But this is not guaranteed!** The following preconditions would need to be met:
 - Development of a **universal cure or vaccine for COVID** that is robust against all variants.
 - Discovery of a **cure for Long COVID** to prevent mass disability among previously healthy people.
 - **Negotiated peace in Ukraine**
 - **De-escalation of tensions between the United States and both Russia and China.**

It would also be nice for the U.S. to adopt a **no-first-use policy** toward nuclear weapons.

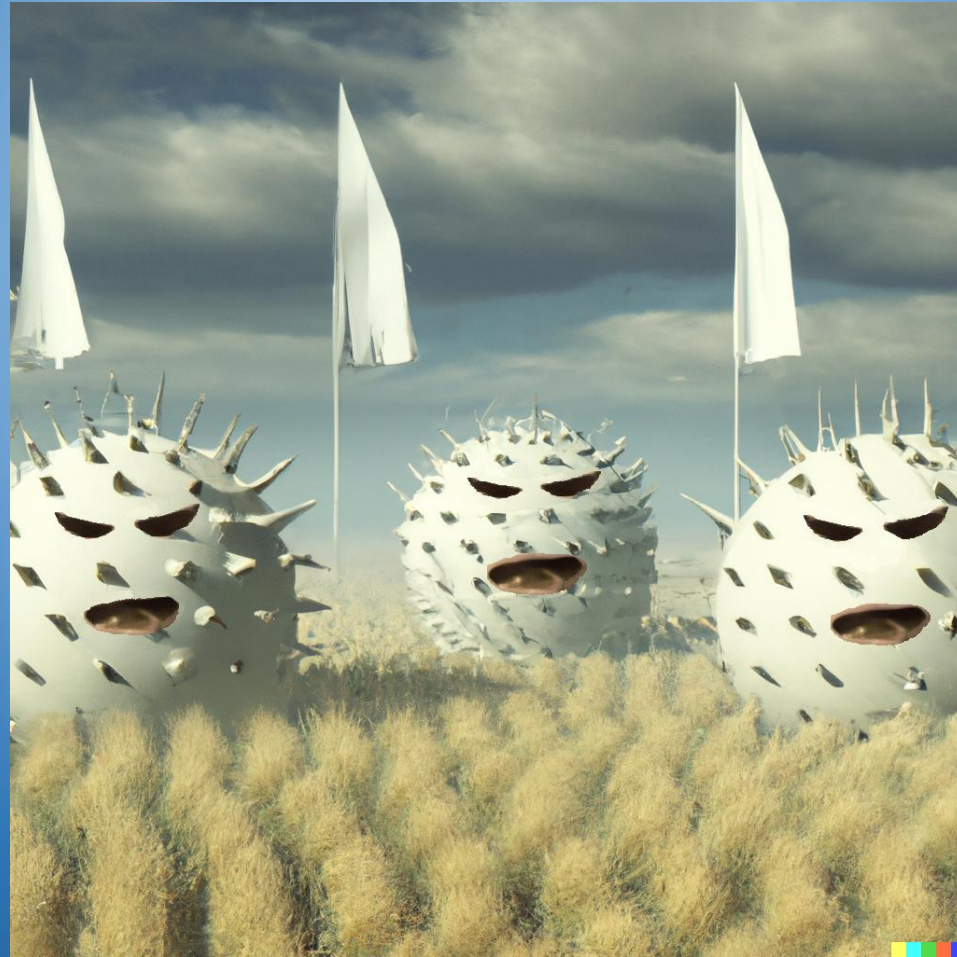
But the best scenario would be one of **worldwide nuclear disarmament.**





COVID and Death Are Our Enemies, Not Humans from Other Countries!

We need to be fighting the correct war!





Avoid nuclear annihilation!

Live long and prosper!

