

One in Septillion – Our Existential Challenge Has Arrived

Many people are familiar with an important line from JFK's inaugural speech of 1960, "*And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you--ask what you can do for your country.*" However, there is another statement in that address that deserves equal attention and is probably far more relevant today: "*The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life.*"

The existential threats facing humanity have only multiplied since JFK's address. Indeed, I would argue humanity's future was called into question in March 2023 when three clear calls to address our civilizational threats emerged. On March 29 leading technologists called for a pause in the development of artificial intelligence. On March 16th a UN report concluded that Russia had committed torture and war crimes in Ukraine and on March 18th the IPCC issued its synthesis report on the potential impacts of climate change.

I must admit to being particularly sensitive to our existential threats ever since reading a December 2011 op-ed by Charles Krauthammer where he applauded the discovery of two new planets before explaining that the scientist Carl Sagan among others had concluded that against all odds, - or one in septillion* - we have not discovered other life forms in our vast universe because of the "***high probability that advanced civilizations destroy themselves.***"

In his book *Pale Blue Dot*, Sagan not only spoke of our human challenge he also pointed the way forward: "*Many of the dangers we face indeed arise from science and technology—but, more fundamentally, because we have become powerful without becoming commensurately wise.*"

Humanity is faced with an urgent need to become wise not only to avoid existential risk but just as importantly to help humanity achieve its full potential at a time of unprecedented opportunity.

Those of us alive today are living at a pivotal time in human history as we may be the last human generation to be able to make that choice.

There is still time available to those of us alive today to come together and build a new ethos, a new story, that can help humanity navigate past our existential challenges to a new age of abundance, but we need to act now without delay to build the wisdom called for by Carl Sagan.

Read more for the full document...[One in Septillion \(oneworlddiv.com\)](https://oneworlddiv.com)