

Thoughts on LA

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The fires in Los Angeles cannot be ignored.

First, I express my heartfelt concern for those who have suffered, will suffer and will need to rebuild their lives. This is a life-changing experience. For some, it has cost their lives. One cannot help but feel for their suffering and distress.

Second, let's deal with the politics of this. First, there is massive market failure at play here. In the last year or so, seventy per cent of the properties now being destroyed (because this is ongoing, and no one knows when it will stop) lost any access to affordable insurance, or even insurance at all. The market, presumably, knew the risks and has left people high and dry. The cost, so far, is estimated to be \$150 billion. A large part of that will fall on the US state or the state of California. I gather there is a fallback state scheme.

This makes clear the cost of neglect. Trump, Musk and others have spouted utter nonsense on who and what is to blame. Climate change and the failure to react are the real issues. Let's not pretend otherwise. Trump, meanwhile, denies climate change is an issue, meaning a reaction is not possible.

Third, this will happen again. Those who survive these fires—and I suspect most will—will eventually experience other disasters in LA and beyond.

Fourth, those disasters will happen here. Why, for example, we are not damming the Wash from North Norfolk to Lincolnshire right now so that vast amounts of Eastern England are saved from inevitable destruction by seawater flooding in the next thirty years or so beats me. And yes, I know some wildlife locations I treasure will be lost. Those objecting for that reason need to smell the coffee: they will be lost anyway if action is not taken, and new ones will develop.

Fifth, there is no one but the state who can manage this. To pretend, as the far-right does, that we now need a small state is not just absurd; it literally threatens our survival. We can only manage what is coming as communities, as nations, and as

cooperating countries. The small-state and even no-state logic of the far-right, coupled with their denial of climate change, massively increases our risk at present.

Sixth, we need to spare a thought for those suffering a worse fate than this in Gaza. Innocent suffering is not limited to rich parts of the USA. Those who wish to argue otherwise will be banned from this blog, whoever they are. I think it is only fair to make that clear in advance.