

Original Paper

From Solvency to Dignity: Artificial Intelligence, Energy, and a New Social Pact

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence requires systematic reflection on the relationship between technological progress, collective responsibility and the dignity of the person, making a new social pact necessary. The article links dependence on fossil fuels to geopolitical imbalances, inflationary pressures and the ability of authoritarian regimes to support power policies, proposing international coordination, including at the UN, that reconciles energy security, climate protection and the transition to renewable sources and, in perspective, nuclear fusion. This analysis is accompanied by the criticism of an economy based exclusively on solvency, which excludes needs without adequate purchasing power from the production and distribution of essential goods. To combat poverty, inequality and vulnerability to war, an international agency capable of promoting socially useful work and coordinating the production and distribution of fundamental resources is envisaged. In this framework, artificial intelligence and robotics could contribute to the analysis of needs, the organization of work, agriculture, assistance and scientific research, as long as they remain subordinate to democratic decision-making and criteria of transparency, human control and non-discrimination. Finally, the technological comparison between the United States, China and Europe shows the need, especially for Europe, to strengthen investment, research and regulatory capacity. Energy, peace, social justice and innovation are thus brought back to the different dimensions of a single pact based on collective responsibility and human dignity.

Keywords

market dynamics, speculative waves, technological innovation, artificial intelligence, collective development

1. Introduction

Wars of aggression promoted by authoritarian regimes do not depend on a single cause but can be favored by the availability of large energy revenues. A high price of oil strengthens exporting countries, increases inflationary pressures in importing states and can expand the resources allocated to power policies. This observation gives rise to the hypothesis of a multilateral intervention, possibly promoted at the UN, aimed at reducing international demand for oil and natural gas in a coordinated and temporary way. To this end, renewable, nuclear and hydroelectric sources could be used more intensively and, only where necessary, conventional plants. A limited time experiment would make it possible to verify, since shared data, whether the contraction in demand could affect international prices without producing disproportionate economic and environmental consequences.

A coordinated reduction in demand for fossil fuels could mitigate international prices and, consequently, some inflationary pressures in the most exposed countries. However, the outcome would not be automatic: it would depend on the duration of the intervention, the response of producers, the ability of alternative sources to replace oil and gas, and the overall performance of the world economy. For this reason, an initiative promoted at the UN should include measurable targets, a defined period of application and continuous monitoring of the effects on prices, energy security and the most vulnerable social groups.

The budget package should also respect an essential limitation: price containment must not jeopardize climate protection. Any transitional use of coal-fired plants should therefore be limited to cases of strict necessity, subject to verification and accompanied by an acceleration of investments in renewable sources and low-emission technologies. In this way, short-term intervention in energy markets would remain consistent with the objective of permanently reducing the use of fossil fuels and the resulting global warming.

With regard to global warming, it must be emphasized that limiting the rise in the planet's temperature is a vital and unavoidable necessity. A significant share of responsibility lies with the prolonged use of oil and other fossil fuels. The interests of producing countries, now joined by the United States, may nevertheless come into tension with those of importing countries, including many European states. This produces a fragmentation of traditional alliances, influenced by the pursuit of greater solvency and the desire to protect respective energy interests.

Producing countries also appear to rely on oil's continuing centrality over the coming decades, while tending to downplay the risks associated with global warming and the need to move beyond the fossil-fuel era. The current balance of the oil market, characterized by generally high prices, therefore represents a decisive challenge for the next five years. To address it, non-producing countries that depend on imports of oil and natural gas should promote a common strategy capable of reconciling energy security, price containment, and climate protection.

The influence of oil markets on prices and inflationary pressures makes a common strategy among the main consumer countries urgent. This strategy should pursue two complementary objectives: in the short term, limiting vulnerability to price fluctuations; and in the long term, accelerating the end of dependence

on fossil fuels. Delays in the development of renewable energy and the still uncertain timetable for nuclear fusion, the so-called “artificial sun,” make a gradual but irreversible transition essential. International coordination should therefore integrate energy security, technological innovation, and renewed commitments to protect the planet from the adverse effects of global warming.

The strategy adopted by fossil-fuel-importing countries should employ all available policy instruments to reduce oil’s structural dominance and establish an irreversible transition toward renewable energy and, over the longer term, nuclear fusion. Coordinated action under United Nations auspices could facilitate the renewal of international climate agreements and define common principles governing the transitional use of fossil fuels, while avoiding an overly simplistic division between authoritarian producer states and democratic consumer states.

2. Oil, Power, and Dignity: From Energy Dependence to Work for All

The current unstable balance between oil- and natural-gas-producing countries and consuming countries is, at present, becoming dangerously tilted in favor of the former, even though what is at stake is the protection of a warming planet and, consequently, the health of the eight billion people who depend on its condition. This division of the world is itself closely connected with human selfishness and persists despite the conflicts that oppose the two blocs. Within this framework lies the ambiguous position of the President of the United States, who straddles the two camps because America, although a major oil producer, seeks for political reasons to maintain a hybrid position between the parties involved.



Figure 1. Beyond Oil and War: Artificial Intelligence's Contribution to Human Dignity

We might suppose that the war against Iran falls outside the producer-consumer paradigm.

But this is not the case. America has sought to subject another major producer of oil and natural gas to its will, although the stated reasons concerned enriched uranium intended for building a bomb. From this perspective, the long pauses, punctuated by the destruction of facilities used for refining and transporting oil and gas, can be understood.

Relations between the United States and Russia also pass through alternating phases: Washington sometimes appears to seek an understanding with Putin's Russia, while Moscow remains determined to continue the war against Ukraine. As for a possible alignment of interests among the major oil producers, Greenland also deserves attention, since its Arctic territory contains oil resources in areas close to the sea. U.S. interest could therefore also be linked to the prospect of keeping oil at the center of energy strategy for the coming decades; this interpretation, however, requires evidence and does not justify attributing a single motivation to U.S. policy.

As can be seen, relations among the great powers are anything but straightforward. The availability of energy reserves helps establish power relations among producing countries: greater resources can translate into a broader capacity for influence and coordination. The confrontation with Iran can also be read, alongside the stated security concerns, in the context of competition for hegemony between the United States and major producers of oil and gas. This interpretation does not, however, exhaust the causes of the conflict and must be supported by specific evidence. Oil damages the planet: it contributes to global warming, which causes widespread droughts and unexpected floods. Ranking countries by their reserves of black gold serves no purpose other than to impose, out of selfish interest, an oil-based civilization against the will of the world's population to reduce the massive use of fossil fuels.

The divide continues to set those who aspire to dignified living conditions against an economically privileged minority capable of shaping the social order around particular interests, thereby worsening poverty and inequality for the majority. The shift to the right of many political movements worldwide, including the Republican Party in the United States, should be read as a warning sign. The future cannot merely replicate the present: the logic of war must be overcome once and for all, even though countries endowed with oil reserves continue to resort to it with ease despite its evident harmful consequences. The logic of war has a twofold connection: on the one hand, with widespread poverty, which fuels the desire for better social conditions; on the other, with the authoritarian concentration of power, which enables a few to govern the masses.

To break this unacceptable dual equilibrium, one could begin by reducing poverty and entrusting uncultivated land to people willing to farm it. Any increase in the production of essential foodstuffs could be supported by the supervision of a United Nations agency tasked with promoting transparent procedures and verifying, with due respect for the powers of the states concerned, that aid reaches the most vulnerable families. From this perspective, the Latin "**Sine labore non erit panis in ore**" should be understood not as a judgment on people's presumed inactivity, but as an invitation to regard work as an essential condition of autonomy and social inclusion. The difficulties would therefore lie not so much

in a generalized unwillingness of men and women to work as in the economic and institutional barriers that may restrict access to employment opportunities.

These barriers must be removed so that citizens' willingness to work is recognized and concretely supported. For many people, a cycle takes hold that is difficult to break: after repeated rejections, they eventually give up looking for employment. Such exclusion also stems from the primacy assigned to solvency, which measures demand solely by the availability of money and leaves essential needs without adequate purchasing power in the shadows. Instead, the real demand for basic goods, often unexpressed, must be considered in relation to the fundamental needs of families and of humanity as a whole.

The transition from a money-dominated vision to an order founded on dignity cannot be immediate: in an initial phase, every citizen will need to be guaranteed remuneration commensurate with the economic value of their family's basic needs, linked, according to ability and skills, to socially useful work. This would initiate a gradual transition capable of correcting inequalities without causing an abrupt break with an economic system still based on money. The prospect nevertheless remains open—also evoked by some leading figures in the development of artificial intelligence, including Elon Musk—of a future society in which money gradually loses its central function: a hypothesis that already requires us to consider how resources, work, and opportunities should be distributed according to criteria of collective responsibility and human dignity.

While awaiting a future that promises profound social and economic change, one might consider a solution that would be complex to implement: establishing, under the auspices of the United Nations, a dedicated agency tasked with involving all people of goodwill who seek employment to support their families. The Agency would assign each person work suited to their experience or aptitudes, with the aim of increasing the production of essential goods needed by families. Such activity could encompass every sector, from mining to the production of basic foodstuffs, and extend to all areas affected by underdevelopment and shortages of fundamental goods, promoting new production compatible with the needs of an already warming planet.

This would create a circuit organized and directed by the Agency, whose output would return, in the form of goods and resources, to the benefit of the most disadvantaged families. The underlying idea is that the Earth has the capacity to feed all its inhabitants, wherever they may be. If part of humanity suffers from hunger, this is not because the Earth is ungenerous, but because human selfishness has barricaded itself behind the imaginary boundary of money and has thus made solvency the perimeter within which the goods necessary for family life are produced.

3. Artificial Intelligence and a New Social Pact: Tools for Peace and Dignity

Let us now turn to a distinct but closely connected issue. It is reasonable to ask whether wars of aggression such as those now affecting Europe, the Middle East, and Africa could still find fertile ground in a world where food, social, and housing poverty had been definitively overcome and every family had

what it needed to live with dignity and participate in civic life. What means of persuasion could authoritarian regimes use in a society no longer marked by deprivation and exclusi

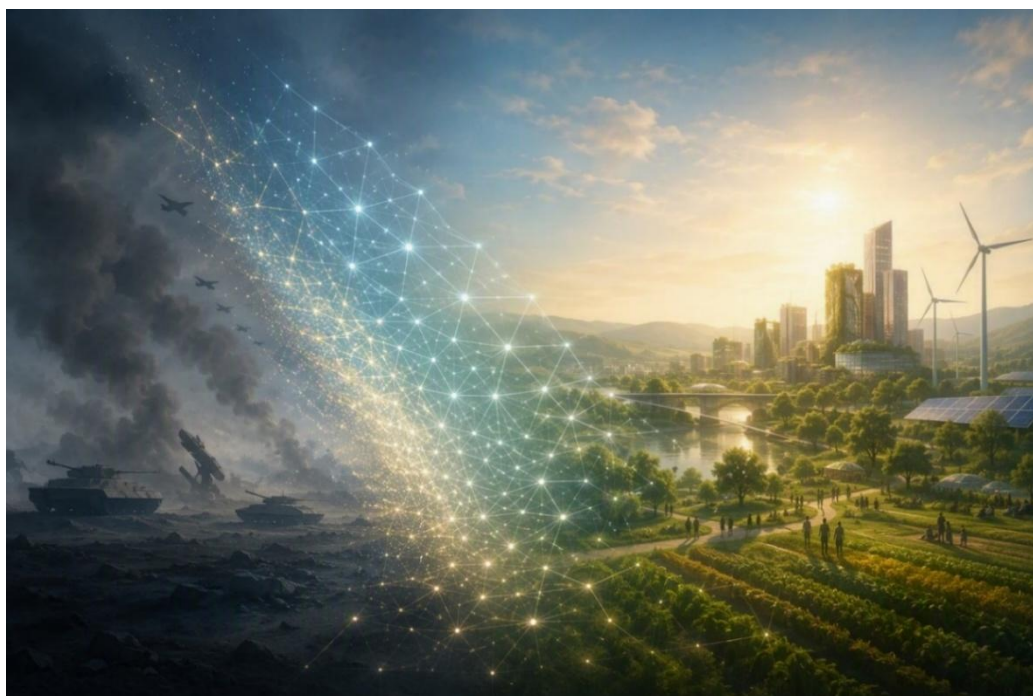


Figure 2. Artificial Intelligence in the Service of Peace and Human Dignity

In my view, the criterion that defines markets exclusively based on solvency has excluded millions of people from fully civic participation, often leaving their survival to assistance and solidarity. This marginalization may also make some individuals more vulnerable to military recruitment, presented as one of the few paths to income, recognition, and belonging. Without relying solely on direct opposition to regimes that fuel conflicts, it might therefore be possible to reduce society's readiness for war by addressing the economic conditions that foster exclusion and dependence.

An essential question then remains: in increasingly interconnected societies, shaped by migration, exchange, and family ties among different populations, against whom should one fight? The growing proximity of people shows how fragile representations based on rigid separations are; the history of human migration instead reminds us of a common origin and profound interdependence among all communities. For the hatchet of war to be buried once and for all among the peoples of every territory and continent, it is unrealistic to expect selfishness and the obsession with solvency to disappear forever from the hearts of those who hold power. History, too often reduced to a chronicle of battles endured and victories won, shows how difficult it is to expect such a miracle. Countless mothers have lost their children because of dictators' relentless warmongering. Our hope is that this inhuman toll of victims may finally come to an end. Since the attempt to act solely upon the selfishness that hardens the human heart has proved

insufficient, we must change perspective and consider the material conditions that drive men and women to face the martyrdom of war in order to escape a life deprived of essential goods.

From this perspective, a United Nations agency could be established to promote, with the consent and participation of representatives of the territories concerned, an international system for producing and distributing essential goods. While coordinating with ordinary markets, this system should operate according to criteria not exclusively subordinate to the availability of money, so that needs lacking adequate purchasing power are also recognized. Its legitimacy should derive from shared rules, transparent oversight, and the will of those who reject rigid social divisions and support an egalitarian conception of human dignity found in various religious, philosophical, and civic traditions. The aim would not be to abolish the market, but to complement it with an instrument capable of ensuring that people's fundamental needs are not excluded from the production and distribution of resources.

This brings us to the essential point: what contribution can AI make to improving living conditions, especially for the peoples of Africa, reducing hunger worldwide and, by overcoming hunger, finally removing the wars that still afflict the lives and well-being of too many peoples? In an earlier text, we already discussed the help that AI-enabled robots could provide to families, particularly older people living alone. Beyond this, while awaiting robots capable of self-awareness and collaboration in accelerating scientific, medical, and pharmacological research, we may also consider the essential contribution of robots in fields and agriculture to break the cycle in which food supplies are constrained by solvency.

Their intellect necessities and assistance—if that expression can be used for a humanoid—could make it possible, without greater burdens on public finances, to cultivate land, produce basic necessities, and distribute them. In the meantime, we may have resolved the energy problem that afflicts the present day, driven by oil and natural-gas producers seeking to impose the widespread long-term use of fossil energy. This creates an almost simultaneous need to turn the corner on global warming and the serious problems that loom ahead. As can be seen, the Earth is not a hostile mother: alongside grave problems, it also brings forth solutions, which are not simply ready at hand but are achieved through the rigorous commitment and noble determination of scientists and researchers.

In this new framework, artificial intelligence could perform a concrete role while remaining subordinate to democratic decision-making: analyzing essential needs, identifying production shortfalls, coordinating labor supply, and monitoring the distribution of resources. Its use should be governed by criteria of transparency, human oversight, data protection, and non-discrimination, so that technological efficiency does not replace political responsibility. Artificial intelligence would thus become not the subject of the new social pact, but an instrument serving peace, inclusion, and dignity.

Nothing, however, is achieved without commitment: scientific research and technological solutions require investment, responsibility, and a long-term vision. Their development could help break the equilibrium founded on poverty, war, selfishness, and the primacy of solvency. Democratic institutions can act in this direction, with Europe at the forefront of protecting the rights of individuals and people,

together with all those who aspire to a fairer international order. The economic and technological competition between the United States and China must also be considered with caution. China's position in the global economy was facilitated by the transfer of numerous Western industrial activities, while Western countries directed a growing share of their resources toward new technologies. This transformation could lead to broader use of robotics and, in the longer term, greater energy availability. The two developments are closely connected: without sufficient, sustainable, and accessible energy sources, even a society extensively assisted by robots would remain difficult to realize.

The relationship between robotics and energy should not, however, be understood as automatic or one-directional. Wider deployment of robotic systems would likely increase energy demand, while the availability of sustainable and affordable energy would be only one of the necessary conditions, alongside technical progress, investment, and rules capable of directing their use toward socially beneficial purposes.

4. Conclusion

We have now reached the epilogue. The human story seems to follow a path in which technological, social, and cultural transformations unfold alongside ancient and still unresolved problems such as poverty and war. In this context, the debate on reforming the United Nations and appointing its Secretary-General deserves attention, since it could respond to growing needs for international cooperation and integration. These developments should nevertheless be considered cautiously, without attributing to them effects that only time can confirm. I would therefore like to return to the theory of circles, understood as historical cycles that follow one another and progressively orient human existence toward the future.

Faced with a future still taking shape, certain inertia among governments can sometimes be perceived; yet the direction of change depends to a large extent on scientific research and new discoveries. Science and research help give form and substance to humanity's future across different fields, according to a complex and not always predictable design. The passage from one ring of history to the next thus arises from the interplay of human events, innovations, and social transformations.

One example is the spread of mechanical science from the West to other continents, which represented an essential movement in the history of technological development. This process helped broaden scientific and cultural exchange and could foster new international relations, including in South Asia. At the same time, the rise of artificial intelligence appears to open a new phase of innovation whose economic and social outcomes must still be assessed carefully. Dialogue between China and the United States on these issues signals AI's growing strategic importance. In Europe, despite significant initiatives, support for businesses, research centers, and universities should be strengthened so that the continent can participate more consistently in the development and regulation of these technologies.

We are therefore at a delicate turning point. Italy and Europe risk approaching the new phase of research centered on artificial intelligence and its possible developments with insufficient attention. To seize its

opportunities, Europe should avoid a merely subordinate position and consolidate its own scientific, industrial, and regulatory capacity, also enhancing cooperation with the countries of the western Mediterranean. Progress can be assessed by observing the actual spread of robotic systems in services and everyday activities. Before reaching definitive conclusions about any European delay, however, it will be necessary to consider carefully the pace of this diffusion, its social usefulness, and its effects on employment. A second decisive front concerns energy. In Italy, policies supporting renewable sources have slowed just as the war in the Middle East has driven up oil prices and fueled inflation throughout the West. The decision to reconsider new nuclear power plants, changing the direction expressed by the referendum held after the Chernobyl accident, may also be read as an acknowledgment of a delay in energy policy. This delay can still be overcome, whereas political initiative in the field of artificial intelligence remains substantially weak. Energy and AI are, in fact, two closely connected frontiers of the new phase of development begun by the West after a significant share of industrial production was transferred to Asia, and China in particular.



Figure 3. Peter Paul Rubens, Minerva Protects Peace from Mars (Peace and War), 1629–1630, National Gallery, London. Wisdom drives war away and safeguards peace, prosperity, and future generations.

Source:

https://as2.ftcdn.net/jpg/06/79/57/19/1000_F_679571959_pMM0h4NLC1Jfo5ZlmXEvVnO00RJtzO0C.jpg

Xi's China shows strong concern about its relative technological lag behind the United States and appears to be guided in part by this concern in its dialogue with the U.S. President, who receives him with the honors reserved for a monarch. Assessing the results of this initiative is, of course, a separate matter. Europe, despite facing a potentially serious delay on the new frontier of artificial-intelligence development, does not appear to act with equal determination. The continent remains strongly focused on the decline of the mechanical economy and on exports of industrial goods—activities that are still important, but tied to an earlier phase of development, however difficult that may be to accept. Europe is a major user of the latest generation of AI, but it does not appear equally committed to allocating public resources to companies, research centers, and universities working primarily within the new technological cycle.

Persistent concern over weak growth, which for more than five years has weighed on the European economy and its geopolitical capacity, has not found sufficient political advocates, who are often focused mainly on upcoming electoral deadlines in the continent's various states. One possible response might recall the proposal advanced by the Chinese premier during the recent visit to the United States: facilitating the admission of 600,000 young Chinese people to American universities. The objective would be not only to learn the latest innovations, but also to spread a shared culture among young people who should not find themselves on opposing sides. The new generations constitute a still-open space in their cultural and intellectual outlook, on which to build a future of relationships and connections destined to resemble one another, regardless of the continent in which they choose to live.

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