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## DOCUMENT A

**George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant" (*New Writing Magazine*, 1936), e-book, University of Adelaide Library, South Australia.**

[...] But at that moment I glanced round at the crowd that had followed me. It was an immense crowd, two thousand at the least and growing every minute. It blocked the road for a long distance on either side. I looked at the sea of yellow faces above the garish clothes-faces all happy and excited over this bit of fun, all certain that the elephant was going to be shot. They were watching me as they would watch a conjurer about to perform a trick. They did not like me, but with the magical rifle in my hands I was momentarily worth watching. And suddenly I realized that I should have to shoot the elephant after all. The people expected it of me and I had got to do it; I could feel their two thousand wills pressing me forward, irresistibly. And it was at this moment, as I stood there with the rifle in my hands, that I first grasped the hollowness, the futility of the white man's dominion in the East. Here was I, the white man with his gun, standing in front of the unarmed native crowd—seemingly the leading actor of the piece; but in reality I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind. I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys. He becomes a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalized figure of a sahib. For it is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life in trying to impress the "natives," and so in every crisis he has got to do what the "natives" expect of him. He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it. I had got to shoot the elephant. I had committed myself to doing it when I sent for the rifle. A sahib has got to act like a sahib; he has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things. To come all that way, rifle in hand, with two thousand people marching at my heels, and then to trail feebly away, having done nothing—no, that was impossible. The crowd would laugh at me. And my whole life, every white man's life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at.

But I did not want to shoot the elephant. I watched him beating his bunch of grass against his knees, with that preoccupied grandmotherly air that elephants have. It seemed to me that it would be murder to shoot him. At that age I was not squeamish about killing animals, but I had never shot an elephant and never wanted to. (Somehow it always seems worse to kill a large animal.) Besides, there was the beast's owner to be considered. Alive, the elephant was worth at least a hundred pounds; dead, he would only be worth the value of his tusks, five pounds, possibly. But I had got to act quickly. I turned to some experienced-looking Burmans who had been there when we arrived, and asked them how the elephant

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had been behaving. They all said the same thing: he took no notice of you if you left him alone, but he might charge if you went too close to him.

35 It was perfectly clear to me what I ought to do. I ought to walk up to within, say, twenty-five yards of the elephant and test his behavior. If he charged, I could shoot; if he took no notice of me, it would be safe to leave him until the mahout came back. But also I knew that I was going to do no such thing. I was a poor shot with a rifle and the ground was soft mud into which one would sink at every step. If the elephant charged and I missed him, I should have about as much chance as a toad under a steam-roller. But even then I was not  
40 thinking particularly of my own skin, only of the watchful yellow faces behind. For at that moment, with the crowd watching me, I was not afraid in the ordinary sense, as I would have been if I had been alone. A white man mustn't be frightened in front of "natives"; and so, in general, he isn't frightened. The sole thought in my mind was that if anything went wrong those two thousand Burmans would see me pursued, caught, trampled on and  
45 reduced to a grinning corpse like that Indian up the hill. And if that happened it was quite probable that some of them would laugh. That would never do.

There was only one alternative. I shoved the cartridges into the magazine and lay down on the road to get a better aim. The crowd grew very still, and a deep, low, happy sigh, as of people who see the theatre curtain go up at last, breathed from innumerable throats.  
50 They were going to have their bit of fun after all. The rifle was a beautiful German thing with cross-hair sights. I did not then know that in shooting an elephant one would shoot to cut an imaginary bar running from ear-hole to ear-hole. I ought, therefore, as the elephant was sideways on, to have aimed straight at his ear-hole, actually I aimed several inches in front of this, thinking the brain would be further forward.

55 When I pulled the trigger I did not hear the bang or feel the kick—one never does when a shot goes home—but I heard the devilish roar of glee that went up from the crowd. In that instant, in too short a time, one would have thought, even for the bullet to get there, a mysterious, terrible change had come over the elephant. He neither stirred nor fell, but every line of his body had altered. He looked suddenly stricken, shrunken, immensely old, as  
60 though the frightful impact of the bullet had paralysed him without knocking him down. At last, after what seemed a long time—it might have been five seconds, I dare say—he sagged flabbily to his knees. His mouth slobbered. An enormous senility seemed to have settled upon him. One could have imagined him thousands of years old. I fired again into the same spot. At the second shot he did not collapse but climbed with desperate slowness to his feet  
65 and stood weakly upright, with legs sagging and head drooping. I fired a third time. That was the shot that did for him. You could see the agony of it jolt his whole body and knock the last remnant of strength from his legs. But in falling he seemed for a moment to rise, for as his hind legs collapsed beneath him he seemed to tower upward like a huge rock toppling, his trunk reaching skyward like a tree. He trumpeted, for the first and only time. And then down  
70 he came, his belly towards me, with a crash that seemed to shake the ground even where I lay.

I got up. The Burmans were already racing past me across the mud. It was obvious that the elephant would never rise again, but he was not dead. He was breathing very rhythmically with long rattling gasps, his great mound of a side painfully rising and falling. His  
75 mouth was wide open—I could see far down into caverns of pale pink throat. I waited a long

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time for him to die, but his breathing did not weaken. Finally I fired my two remaining shots into the spot where I thought his heart must be. The thick blood welled out of him like red velvet, but still he did not die. His body did not even jerk when the shots hit him, the tortured breathing continued without a pause. He was dying, very slowly and in great agony, but in some world remote from me where not even a bullet could damage him further. I felt that I had got to put an end to that dreadful noise. It seemed dreadful to see the great beast lying there, powerless to move and yet powerless to die, and not even to be able to finish him. I sent back for my small rifle and poured shot after shot into his heart and down his throat. They seemed to make no impression. The tortured gasps continued as steadily as the ticking of a clock.

In the end I could not stand it any longer and went away. I heard later that it took him half an hour to die. Burmans were bringing dash and baskets even before I left, and I was told they had stripped his body almost to the bones by the afternoon.

Afterwards, of course, there were endless discussions about the shooting of the elephant. The owner was furious, but he was only an Indian and could do nothing. Besides, legally I had done the right thing, for a mad elephant has to be killed, like a mad dog, if its owner fails to control it. Among the Europeans opinion was divided. The older men said I was right, the younger men said it was a damn shame to shoot an elephant for killing a coolie, because an elephant was worth more than any damn Coringhee coolie. And afterwards I was very glad that the coolie had been killed; it put me legally in the right and it gave me a sufficient pretext for shooting the elephant. I often wondered whether any of the others grasped that I had done it solely to avoid looking a fool.

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## DOCUMENT B

**Achim Steiner, “Beyond Cecil: the illegal trade in wildlife has real consequences for the world”, *The Guardian*, 10 August 2015.**

As the world agonised over the death of Cecil the lion late last month, poachers in Kenya’s Tsavo West National Park – less than 300km from the UN Environment Programme world headquarters in Nairobi – illegally slaughtered five elephants, plundered the carcasses and fled the country with their ivory prize. Compared to Cecil, the slaughter barely registered on the world’s radar.

The slaughter of five elephants in Kenya was no anomaly – it’s a symptom of a global epidemic. Estimates show some 100,000 elephants out of a population of 420,000–650,000 were killed in Africa between 2010 and 2012. In 2014, poachers slaughtered 1,215 rhinos in South Africa alone, an increase of over 9,000% from 2007. Great apes lost to illegal activities number in the thousands worldwide.

These killings are extremely upsetting. But while we often view them as an aesthetic loss or an ethical shortfall, we frequently fail to see how such tragedies reverberate deep within our societies.

The global illegal trade in wildlife has very real consequences for the world, beyond an ethical quandary. It ruins ecosystems, destroys livelihoods, undermines governments, threatens national security and sabotages sustainable development.

The illegal wildlife trade is deeply disruptive to our ecosystems. A dramatic population collapse triggers knock-on effects throughout the entire system. Removing elephants in large numbers, for example, means that plant seeds are not spread widely. Other species, whose diets rely on plant diversity, must endure this shift. As species populations dwindle, their genetic diversity decreases and disease is more easily spread.

And the changes are equally unbalancing for communities. Those reliant on their immediate surroundings for sustenance find themselves suddenly facing inhospitable environments. Where magnificent animals like rhinos and gorillas attract tourists, those who rely on the tourism industry suffer the animals’ absence. Where tourism drives the economy, the effect is devastating.

A look at the money involved explains why. A recent report by the United Nations Environment Programme (Unep) and Interpol estimated the value of transnational organised environmental crime, including illegal exploitation of wildlife and forest resources, at up to US\$213bn (£137bn) annually. This economic loss is particularly felt in developing countries where natural resource wealth represents a foundation for sustainable development. That this revenue instead goes to line the pockets of criminals compounds the issue.

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35 Where crime flourishes, corruption blooms. As the rule of law is undermined, criminality multiplies. If the animals are the first victims of these criminals, then good governance and the rule of law are not far behind.

Indeed, illicit wildlife trade supports organised crime and non-state armed groups. Ivory funds militias in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic, and horse gangs in Sudan, Chad and Niger.

40 As criminal organisations take root, the cycle of the illegal wildlife trade becomes self-propagating. But while the cycle is tragic, it is not inescapable.

45 UN member states have now recognised the significance of wildlife crime, placing it high on the global environmental and sustainable development agenda at the first UN Environmental Assembly last year. Last week, they reaffirmed their commitment to tackle the issue with the adoption of an historic wildlife trafficking resolution at the UN General Assembly.

50 Environmental crime is a serious threat to sustainable development but the consequences are first felt at the local level. When devising solutions, we must account for both conservation and what works for those living with wildlife, which is why we're working with partners to ensure a coherent international response is in place, aimed at both the supply and demand side of the illegal wildlife trade. As we work to eradicate international demand, we are helping to improve intelligence and border controls, and to strengthen enforcement and prosecution capabilities so governments can build strong institutional, legal and regulatory systems.

55 It's a rare and fleeting occasion that the global community turns its collective attention to this important topic, even if context may be sidelined for headlines. Before we move on to other issues, it's important to take a moment and remember that the rifle shots of a poacher echo far beyond an elephant's watering hole.

*Achim Steiner is the UN Environment Programme executive director and United Nations under-secretary-general.*

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## DOCUMENT C

Tiger hunting: George Curzon, 1st Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, and his wife in British India. Camp near Nekonda, Warangal district, Andhra Pradesh, April 1902

Raja Deen Dayal & Sons State Photographers  
British Library, Oriental and India Office collection

