

# Strategic Policy in an Age of Sovereignty Wars

*A Six-Part Presentation*

- 1. Defining Terms; 2. Grand Strategy;*
- 3. The Next Era of Security;*
- 4. Terrorism Gives Way to Information Dominance;*
- 5. Strategic Will; and 6. Current Security Challenges*

The Capstone presentation by  
**Gregory R. Copley**<sup>i</sup>

to the Tenth National Security Programme (NSP10) of The Canadian Forces College,  
*Toronto: June 11, 2018*

*Talks are underway as we speak between US Pres. Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un. This event alone — a significant break in 65 years of stalemate — should highlight the reality that Canada has emerged from the Cold War and post-Cold War eras into a dramatically different global context; one which is only at the beginning of its evolution. I am keen to open discussions with you on the exciting events underway, but it is important that this morning we start by addressing the underlying principles in strategy.*

*It should, among other things, confirm that Canada must now become a more committed factor in the Indo-Pacific. Canada is already surrounded by, and is a participant in, a contextual transition which has all of the aspects of a global conflict. It is a conflict, in many respects, between forces favoring sovereignty and those favoring urban-driven anti-nationalist globalism. It is between geopolitical legitimacy, build over decades and centuries, on the one hand, and an essentially revolutionary anti-sovereignty path — developed over the past half-century in particular — on the other*

*The present Canadian Government leans more toward the globalist perspective; the previous Government leaned more toward a nationalist perspective. This is a reversal of the US and UK positions where the former administrations were more globalist and the pre-*

*sent administrations are more nationalist. We can get to all that, but let me say that these differences from one period to another are profound, and will be strategically highly significant.*

*Today, I'll start with the broad canvas and, most importantly, some aspects of strategic philosophy so that we can frame our views of current and future issues.*

*The 20<sup>th</sup> Century gave us two world wars, a string of major revolutions and lesser wars, the advent of powered manned flight and space travel, nuclear weapons, and the creation of a hundred or more new sovereign states. It also gave us an unprecedented trebling of global humanity in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century without stressing food or energy production. But the 20<sup>th</sup> Century will seem like a stable and predictable age when compared with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The path of technological and scientific progress we have known in our lifetimes has already been disrupted. We are now in the “second electrical age”, where our lives and vulnerabilities are all existentially tied to the second-by-second delivery of electrical power. Our electrification is but a century old, and it brings together all of our hopes and – if only we knew it – all of our fears into a single flickering.*

*The future which we take for granted is entirely dependent on an unremitting flow of electricity.*

*The decline in US global authority after the end of the Cold War paralleled the decline in British influence after World War I. The US strategic decline may have occurred at a faster rate than the British retrenchment from its global influence. Britain was eclipsed as the world's dominant economy by the US in 1872. By 2014, the People's Republic of China seemed to be overtaking the US as the world's dominant economy<sup>1</sup>, although not yet in regard to global power potential. The US — and Western — lead in the global power arena was seen as severely threatened, and not just because of Chinese advances. Indeed, China's rise faces many challenges, and Chinese stability is fragile in some fundamental respects. So is the West's. China may find itself profoundly challenged by internal and geographic/structural issues in the coming decade, and the US Trump*

---

<sup>1</sup> Giles, Chris: “China to overtake US as top economic power this year”, in *The Financial Times*, April 30, 2014.

*Administration may well slow the pace of the US strategic descent, and could possibly even bring about a Western resurgence. Whatever the West now is.*

*We are at present witnessing some pivotal developments:*

- *For example, we are witnessing the start of a substantial, but unevenly occurring, reduction in the global human population, already underway in the industrial economies.*
- *We are witnessing our transformation to the second electrical age opens us to existential threats. This ties in to the reality that strategic scale nuclear weapons have been supplanted by cyber weapons, but cyber weapons operating within the greater sphere of psychological strategic information dominance strategies. Nuclear weapons are now theater weapons, when they are not psychological weapons: items to establish deterrence and to enhance prestige.*
- *We are witnessing the failure of China to achieve complete dominance over Eurasia with its “one-belt/one-road” framework. This will change the entire global balance, one way or another. Within a decade we may see the re-emergence of Russia as a true global power; and so on.* [Slide 2]
- *We are witnessing a transformation in north-east Asia, regardless of whether the Trump-Kim talks succeed as originally planned. I told last year’s course that Pres. Trump’s negotiating approach with North Korea could yield a breakthrough as profound in its global ramifications as the Nixon to China breakthrough in 1972. We are beginning to see that beginning to take form, even though I believe we will not see the removal of strategic weapons from the Korean Peninsula. Success does not depend on that.*
- *We are witnessing the fact that Saudi Arabia and Turkey are engaged or all-or-nothing plays for survival which will almost certainly create major disruptions.*

- *We are witnessing the fact that the schism between the US and Continental Europe, which began well before the US Trump Administration, is now becoming profound.*
- *And, we are witnessing, as noted, the fact that a war is now well underway between urban and regional cultural groups in many countries of the world. Western civilisation is essentially in abeyance. This war has nationalists — those who favor a reaffirmation of sovereignty — pitted against globalist, who have abandoned the concept of nation-state sovereignty. And the globalists are in many instances prepared to see the destruction of their nation before they will allow the defeat of the cities.*

*We can address these points and more in the discussion period.*

*The concept of the sovereign nation-state is also transforming: the Westphalian model, which began its formal evolution in 1648, has been assaulted, but is now responding.*

*Social lines and hierarchies, geographical attachments, and power all are gradually returning to clarity in fairly predictable patterns as the dust, inevitably, begins to clear. There will be much heartache before full clarity re-emerges. But re-emerging it is in the form of identity politics. And with this disruption, too, comes change in economic trends. The age of gross domestic product — GDP — as a means of measurement is passing, for example.*

**6 Minutes**

### Slide 3

## PART I: Definitions: Sovereignty and Prestige

**B**efore we even begin to discuss grand strategy and current trends, it is important that we define the terms we use, and which drive our understanding of our positions and our intent. I will dwell today only on two terms, because they are the most important: *Sovereignty* and *Prestige*. It is on these two terms and the concepts which underpin them that the fate of Canada, and all societies, depend.

In fact, the concept of sovereignty is so critical, strategically, and so mis-understood, that my organization has set up a new center to study it: the Zahedi Center for the Study of Monarchy, Traditional Governance, and Sovereignty. A major study, entitled *Sovereignty in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, will be published within the coming month.

### Slide 4

Egyptian President Anwar as-Sadat famously commanded his generals in the planning sessions leading up to the October 1973 war to speak in English, as the language was, he is alleged to have said, more precise than Arabic, and precision was needed at that critical phase of war preparations. The story may be apocryphal, but the lesson was not.

How can we expect our audience to understand our message if we have not thought consciously of the meaning of each word we use?

Even the English language is replete with ambiguity, because time and colloquial usage have a way of evolving the meaning of words. We consistently use words gratuitously until questioned as to our intent behind them.

Equally, concepts cannot be defined precisely, nor goals set with any meaning, unless our language is clear, not only to us, but to our audience. I was challenged on this recently when asked, as I repeated my emphasis on the primacy of prestige in the exercise of strategic authority: Did I not just mean “image”? No, I did not. But the ques-

tion showed how dramatically our communications could be misunderstood, either as to substance or as to priority.

**Sovereignty:** It has become clear that there is a vast discrepancy amongst us all in the interpretation of the word “sovereignty”. And yet, in his inaugural address to the United Nations General Assembly, on September 19, 2017, US Pres. Donald Trump invoked the word 19 times. The year before, in his final speech to the UN General Assembly, outgoing US Pres. Barack Obama used his speech to campaign *against* sovereignty. And yet, as my questioning has revealed, few people — and particularly few in the US — comprehend the actual meaning of the term, let alone the nuance of the concept.

Online dictionaries fail to give the full import of the word, sovereignty, and its underlying concepts, and yet the word is at the heart of the present crisis in many societies around the world, and in the way in which the new global pattern of power alignments is being drawn. *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) of 1933 is more helpful, and notes that sovereignty means:

1. Supremacy or pre-eminence in respect of excellence or efficacy.
2. Supremacy in respect of power, domination, or rank; supreme dominion, or rule.
3. The position, rank, or power of a supreme ruler or monarch; royal authority or dominion. The supreme controlling power in communities not under monarchical government; absolute and independent authority.
4. A territory under the rule of a sovereign, or existing as an independent state.

So sovereignty also clearly relates to an individual, a “sovereign” (a word to denote a supreme leader), or a form of ultimate excellence: a “sovereign remedy”, for example (quite apart from references to the coin designated as a sovereign).

In current strategic parlance, we could probably agree that sovereignty meets aspects of the third and fourth OED definitions: A territory existing as an independent state, and with absolute and independent authority. But there is now more to it than that, even before the question of the authority of a sovereign as a leader is defined.

And that definition begs many qualifications: Can a state or geopolitical entity completely declare *itself* sovereign [we know that they often unilaterally *claim* sovereignty], or is that sovereignty always subject to the acceptance of other sovereign entities? And, if all sovereignty can be challenged, then can it ever be described as “absolute” or with “independent authority”? In other words, is there ever a situation where sovereignty is *not* qualified or tempered? And must a sovereign territory fit the Westphalian definition of a nation-state? And if sovereignty is qualified, can it then have “absolute and independent authority”, such as the case of confederal or federal states within a greater union?

The current urban-globalist view is that sovereignty equates to nationalism, which is perceived as the enemy of global governance. Significantly, while “global governance” is postulated as the province of the United Nations, it is significant that the UN was conceived in 1945 to define and protect nation-states as Westphalian-style sovereign entities. So we can see the evolutionary tendency of definitions.

The dictionary definition does not adequately address the sovereign, or relative sovereign, aspects of the individual person. Sovereignty in the individual sense means the autonomy and independence of each person: the right to exercise control over one’s own destiny. Clearly, the individual’s sovereignty is as qualified (or tempered) as the society’s sovereignty is within a nation-state (a geopolitical entity); it is subject to pressure from those of greater power, or from the collective power of others.

So all individual and national sovereignty is subject to limiting contextual factors.

In other words, sovereignty is always less than absolute over the long term. And in the individual sense — as in the collective voting of a society in multi-sovereign fora — it is only by the exercise of sovereignty that democracy can occur. Democracy is, in essence, the expression of the will of the individual in creating a collective will, expressed as a government or leader, or in a referendum shaping a collective desire.

So to the existing dictionary definition it is necessary to add “individual sovereignty” as a specific, vital building block of the collective sovereignty of the nation-state. Individual sovereignty expresses powers able to be exercised at a personal level over oneself. National sovereignty expresses powers of a nation-state over its members and

over whatever else it can impose its power. Clearly, we would also do well at some stage to clarify in our minds what we mean by “the nation-state” or even by a “nation”. But I will leave that to you. The sovereign, as an individual who holds “supreme controlling powers” — although rarely absolute — may hold office through the democratic exercise of the sovereign will of individuals of a society, or by other means.

Sovereignty, then, is an innate expression of human individuality and collective functioning and therefore the dominion over the geographic space necessary to support the society. Sovereignty, then, is the essential component of geopolitics. Sovereignty is the reflection of the human requirement to control one’s own destiny at a personal and collective level. As such, it is the essence of democracy.

**Prestige:** Prestige is a deep psycho-physical phenomenon which is binary between the holder and each target audience, including audiences of one. The target must see the prestige-holder as being imbued with trust (not necessarily to protect the audience, but to do what the holder is expected to do). In many respects, depending on whether the prestige is held in an individual or a society/organization or whether it is in an inanimate dynamic (such as currency or a form of governance), it must inspire a deep-seated urge to obey, emulate, or possess.

Prestige is the most important word in the strategic lexicon.

Indeed, entire courses in political science, military strategy, leadership, economics, business, and diplomacy could, and should, be built around this single word and the deep concepts it embodies.

It is often, given the co-option of the word by the advertising industry, misconstrued as implying privilege, wealth, luxury, and exclusivity. Well, exclusivity is indeed part of the real meaning of prestige, because it is a quality which sets the possessor apart from others. And it has evolved in meaning since the original Latin *præstigiūm* of the Third to Fifth centuries, when it implied illusion, delusion, or magic.

But it is not, as is popularly believed, a synonym for “image”, a term which implies the superficial, and largely visual unidimensional impression of the subject. Indeed,

any prestige built merely around image — a reflection of materialism — is shallow and unlikely to be durable.

The great strategic philosopher and my late partner, *Dr Stefan Possony (1915-95)*, said: “*Prestige is the credit rating of nations.*” It was perhaps the most important strategic lesson ever conveyed in seven words. Absent prestige, a leader cannot lead. Absent prestige, a currency is worthless. Absent prestige, a nation follows rather than leads.

Prestige is a psychological factor, and cannot be achieved without the holder exhibiting deeply-rooted senses of identity, purpose, and durability. Prestige is not fleeting as mere impressions and image are fleeting. Significantly, prestige may be exhibited by individuals, societies, and dynamic instruments: currencies, governance systems, and potent symbols.

Can inanimate symbols and physical possessions confer prestige upon individuals and systems, such as corporations, military forces, and governments? Yes, but not necessarily as a reflection solely of the inanimate or physical characteristics on their own. A military force may acquire initial prestige — or create fear or awe — simply by the acquisition of advanced technology. It acquires more prestige if that technology is the product of the society which owns it, because it implies leadership and control over the owner’s own societal destiny.

It acquires still more prestige if the society or government which fields that force or technology demonstrates the will and capability to utilize the asset, and particularly if that asset — the technology — seems like a seamlessly innate extension of the force which uses it. Ironically, the technology gains even more prestige if the holder can demonstrate rigorously judicious will in actually utilizing it.

The prestige and power of a military force and the government which wields it declines in direct proportion to the increase in frequency of its use. The demonstration of will and capability is more prestigious than the exercise of it.

There is a direct parallel in the prestige — and therefore the value — of *currency*, which is itself an increasingly psychological and abstract phenomenon and concept.

The more readily available a currency — in other words, the easier it is to obtain and the more it is available — the harder it is for the currency to retain its value. Because value, too, is an entirely psychological function.

Thus there is a dynamic tension between prestige and power on the one hand, and the materialism of wealth and possessions on the other.

How, though, is prestige acquired or built in the initial sense?

There is little doubt that prestige easily acquired is easily lost, just as rank acquired unearned may only fleetingly or partially give prestige to its owner. Prestige not built by its holder upon strong foundations, and defended over long periods, will not be reflected in the eyes of a target audience. In other words, for the prestige of an individual or society — including a military force, or a currency — to be felt by a target audience, it must first be created in the holder through the acquisition of confidence and identity security in the prestige holder.

We think of prestige as being a psychological phenomenon based on the impact it has on the target audience and the sense of self which the prestige holder has. But it is embedded in both parts of the equation — the holder and the perceiver — by physiological as well as psycho-sensory means.

I again cited Possony in a talk I gave in 1998: “Possony, writing in the *Stanford Research Institute Journal* in 1959, discussing “Communist Psychological Warfare”, noted that the communists had ‘learned a great deal about the interrelationships between physiology and psychology’, and that ‘they approach the mind through the body’.<sup>2</sup> And he went on to say that the Soviet view of conditioning and controlling societies and human masses was that ‘the propositions of the doctrine [which it wished to impose] must be attached to the person by extreme emotion’. This, of course, is how society has evolved in its natural state: events sear themselves into the collective psyche, resulting in a societal or group tendency to act in a certain manner. This natural state creates what we call ‘logic’, and we tend to think of it as merely a normal part of life. Military units, thoroughly conditioned to the need for efficient and unquestioning

---

<sup>2</sup> Possony, Stefan T.: “Communist Psychological Warfare”, in the 4th Quarter 1959 edition of SRI Journal, Stanford, California, USA.

obedience and response in the chaos of battlefield conditions, induce the desired group and individual responses by artificially ‘attaching’ doctrine, discipline, and appropriate behavior by the use of ‘extreme emotion’. The punishment of boot camp and the ferocity of regimental sergeants-major have always been known to help create well-trained and efficient soldiers.”

It must embody, as the original *præstigiūm* connoted, *magic*. Whether from a leader, a society, or an iconic object — such as a crown — the prestige must exert *will*; and it must alter, support, or destroy the will of its target audience.<sup>3</sup> In many instances, prestige should be able to build will in one audience and destroy it in others.

[17 minutes]

---

<sup>3</sup> Copley, Gregory R.: “Willpower: Back to Fundamentals”, in *Defense & Foreign Affairs Special Analysis*, May 5m 2016. *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy*, 5/6-2016.

Slide 5

## PART II: The Nature and Meaning of Grand Strategy

**G**rand Strategy is the over-arching, interactive framework for the successful creation, maintenance, growth, and defense of a society. It begins with defining *the nature and goals* of a sovereign society into the indefinite future.

It is called “grand” strategy not because it is grand in the theatrical sense, but because it embraces global elements; its scale and timeframe are grand. It is also constantly and dynamically interactive to a degree unknown in other forms of strategy.

Henry Kissinger once said that if you don’t know where you’re going, any road will take you there. My definition is that if you don’t know where you’re going — as an individual or a society — then every road will lead to disaster.<sup>4</sup> Failing to articulate profound goals, or failing to understand one’s own character places a society in a reactive mode, and reaction is almost always the losing hand.

National goals must be created and nurtured within a constantly evolving, deeply introspective and contextual understanding. *Only then* can subordinate *processes* — the economic, military, and political strategies — be defined and implemented. Coordinating these strategic processes achieves the sovereign *goals* while preserving the *nature* of the society.

Grand strategy, then, comprehends a society’s identity and its fundamental and long-term aspirations. It then identifies and manages intrinsic and emerging threats and opportunities at the largest realistic scale. It creates and manages capabilities to *achieve* what goals have been defined. The grand strategist must achieve all of that within the fluid *context* of constant global change. And that context is, to the greatest degree, what is outside the control of the single sovereign entity.

So grand strategy is a multi-dimensional process and long-term in perspective; and broad in its contextual understanding of its own self and society, and of other socie-

---

<sup>4</sup> Copley, Gregory R.: *The Art of Victory*. New York, 2006: Simon & Schuster’s Threshold Editions.

ties, and of nature, and all of history. But *the process of governance can never take precedence over the goals*. It is process — in other words, policy, and policy implementation — which must be flexible to enable the achievement of goals. Here is a maxim: *Preoccupation with process and means is tactical; preoccupation with outcomes and future context is strategic*.

In the grand strategic framework, *everything* is interconnected.

If the context changes, policies must also evolve commensurately. In the military we comment that “no plan of campaign survives the first shot”, because the very act of *doing* shatters the perfect, or idealised, concepts of the mind. Similarly, no strategy even remains *valid* if contextual reality changes. Despite that statement of the obvious, however, national policies often remain in existence until they are destroyed by events.

#### Slide 6

Put more succinctly: *policies tend to remain unchanged until destroyed by realities generated by external — contextual — forces*. Even victory cannot bring policy changes in the victorious societies. Victorious societies are the ones usually *most* reluctant to change their policies, even though their victory may have rendered the old policies null by virtue of having achieved their purpose. The geography in geopolitics remains constant, but politics remains fluid. Politics *is* people, and people move and change.

Pattern recognition is the key to Grand Strategy.

For the grand strategist, it is insufficient to know merely ourselves and any potential adversary; it is vital to comprehend the warp and weft of history and nature. The more that comprehension is possible, the more that it is then possible for an individual, a leader, or a society to create goals, and determine the means of achieving them, in the full understanding of context.

Grand strategy means getting out of our stovepiped communities.

#### Slide 7

Let's encapsulate grand strategy:

1. Grand strategy uses strategic intelligence, coupled with historical analysis and experience, to identify and quantify the terrain, and the evolving nature of *patterns* in that terrain. This provides the *framework of understanding*; the situational context in the largest sense.
2. With knowledge of the strategic terrain, grand strategy then enables the leadership to define *the national goals* in detail, in the short-, medium-, and long-terms (including the indefinite future). This includes defining the enduring characteristics and values of one's society.
3. Grand strategy defines milestones and interim steps to achieve the goals all the way into that indefinite future, and assigns responsibility for achieving those stages. It then manages and coordinates the "whole-of-society" process of achieving those goals. In all of this, the art of *psychological strategy* — what we are today calling "information dominance" (ID) — is the most important discipline to master. Napoleon Bonaparte said that on the battlefield "the moral is to the physical as two is to one". In other words, even in battle, intangibles and psychological factors are twice as important as physical factors. In grand strategy, psychological factors are *10 times* — perhaps a hundred times — as important as the physical. And physical capabilities, we must remember, are useless without the application of the human mind.

So what we are saying is that all aspects of life and policy form interlocking parts of the grand strategy matrix. Nothing is remote from it, from politics and the social sciences, as well as science and technology, medicine and healthcare, religion and beliefs, agriculture and water supply, economics, military security, education, linguistics, and everything else you can think of.

We can see in all of this that the true dynamic element is human. Geography, climate, nature in general: all are important. But what shapes our destiny is human competition and human capability. Even so, what we see *least* discussed is the area of *population strategy* — perhaps the most critical element within the grand strategic matrix —

so sensitive are we to any suggestion that the human shape of society should be managed. And yet that is *exactly* what social organisation is all about. Politics *is* population management.

**8 Minutes**

Slide 8

### **PART III: Toward a Perspective on the Next Era of Global Security; Why the End of the Age of Consumerism and Scale is Changing the Balance of Power**

*The mini-era we are now leaving took on its distinct characteristics after World War II. A very different world is now emerging, and with it a new power framework and new patterns of conflict and governance.*

Everything changes when an age ends, because new values, weights, and priorities emerge. And all ages *do* end. What we have recently experienced can be described as “the age of consumerism and growing scale”.

Slide 9

One of things which will cause the end of this particular era is the impending decline in global population levels, particularly within the core populations of major industrial societies. This decline is already occurring but is disguised by urbanisation and transnational migration, and these transform societies.

So, what *did* we see as the hallmarks of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century?

Slide 10

*Firstly, The second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw: The temporary bubble of the tripling of the global human population<sup>5</sup>. And that population bubble of “baby boomers” did not replace itself. It is now dying off.*

---

<sup>5</sup> Global population in 1950 was 2,525,778,669, growing at an annualized rate of 1.86 percent. Global population was estimated at 7.47-billion by June 2018. Source: United Nations Dept. of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. The UN statistical research shows a continued decline in population growth rate through the end of the 21st Century, down to an estimated 0.09 percent in 2099. However, this computation is linear, to a great extent, and does not allow for precipitous declines in reproduction rates, now commencing, or for declining life expectancy as a result of economic and urbanization factors, and for a potential decline (again for economic and urbanization reasons) in successful live birth rates.

*Secondly, The second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw:* Compounding technological evolution (and therefore compounding efficiency in the output of goods, services, food, and energy), mostly linked to electricity. This led to the easy production of surpluses in almost all biological as well as inanimate products<sup>6</sup>;

*Thirdly, The second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw:* Dramatically rising average *per capita* wealth, leading to improved caloric intake, longevity, and more successful live birth rates globally;

*Fourth, The second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw:* The consolidation, efficiency, and scale of an open global trading and supply chain architecture; and

*Finally, The second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw:* The urbanisation of the majority of the world's population.

## Slide 11

What was created after World War II was an economic model predicated on the growth in the scale of human numbers, within an open-architecture market

There was, as a result, an unplanned, rapid growth in income *disparity*. Relative wealth growth generally enabled security and comfort on a scale and dispersal unprecedented in history, but income disparity meant that this good fortune was marred by one of the fundamental motivational human factors: *envy*. And envy fuels many things: revolt, migration, ambition, and so on.

---

<sup>6</sup> Significantly, as human numbers have risen, as have the numbers living in urban environments, the ability to grow and make things has grown even more rapidly, and, in the near-term, is likely to rise even further. Economic viability, in such circumstances, then becomes related to the scale of production, and therefore the scale of the market. Conversely, if more products can be produced more efficiently (therefore with fewer people in the production cycle), then new areas of employment must be found for those workers no longer necessary for the production of essential goods and services. By definition, much of this employment must be in “non-essential” areas; ie: areas not vital to human survival. The US *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, on March 25, 2016, published the following quotation: “The rapid increase in emerging technologies suggests that they are having a substantial impact on the workforce,” says Darrell West, director of the Center for Technology Innovation at the Brookings Institution think tank. Oxford University researchers Carl Frey and Michael Osborn studied 702 occupational groupings in 2013 and found “47% of US workers have a high probability of seeing their jobs automated over the next 20 years.” The article’s author, Michael Bruno, went on to note: “Policy might ameliorate technology’s impact to some extent, but it will not stop the silicon-for-carbon swap happening across the workforce. It would behoove all of us to understand that sooner rather than later.”

Wealth and urbanisation *then* caused a massive decline in human reproduction rates. And it ultimately caused a rise in new, urban-related diseases such as diabetes and stress-related heart issues which have begun to hollow out life expectancy improvements in some socio-economic sectors.

The principal reason the era is ending is because the declining human reproduction rate means an inevitable reduction in population levels. This is particularly underway in the urbanized industrial societies which both generate consumption demand and technologically/financially facilitate it.<sup>7</sup> This population decline in industrial societies is currently masked by incoming migratory flows, attracted by the wealth and security of industrial societies' urban anonymity. Within this compensatory migrant flow, however, is the reality that it takes, often, one or two generations (or more) to absorb and acculturate some groups of incoming migrants. The multi-generational transition often creates an increasingly dysfunctional, or less efficient/productive, sector of society.

So a range of changes is already becoming apparent. The Brexit vote in Britain, the Trump election in the US, and the large surges in nationalism are part of this. The Irish referendum on abortion in May 2018 was also part of it. The trends which had been in favorable alignment for growth in the second half of the 20th Century ceased functioning as well in recent years.

The changes are occurring *not* because of the failure of Western civilisation, but because of its *dramatic success* as the most productive form of human organization the world has yet seen. The reality is that Western civilisation to some degree exhausted itself and came to the end of its natural life-cycle as an intensely complex organism. Complexity gives civilisations incredible depth, protection, and resilience. But complexity also makes them ponderous and slow to grow, and less able to outmaneuver

---

<sup>7</sup> See, again, Copley, Gregory R.: *UnCivilization: Urban Geopolitics in a Time of Chaos*. Op cit. That study highlighted the impending possible decline in average *per capita* life expectancy as urbanization-related diseases take hold, largely as a byproduct of sedentism. This is now beginning to counterbalance advances in medical science. The World Health Organization (WHO) in April 2016 released a study, *Global Report on Diabetes* (ISBN 978 92 4 156525 7), which noted that globally, an estimated 422-million adults suffered from diabetes in 2014, compared with 108-million in 1980; that the global prevalence (age-standardized) of diabetes has nearly doubled since 1980, rising from 4.7 percent to 8.5 percent of the adult population. The dramatic increase in diabetes (both Type 1 and Type 2) was ascribed to urbanization-related factors, leading to obesity. *UnCivilization* also noted the urban-related rise in other diseases likely to impact average lifespan expectancy.

sudden, externally-imposed change, or to escape death by internal strangulation. Think of how fast your new computer was, and how slow it became within a year or so.

Civilisations have natural, predictable life-cycles, like all organisms.<sup>8</sup> We now must see how much of our Western civilisation can be sustained through re-birth — as the Hellenic and Roman civilisations were — and what new offspring have been created. Western, or modern, civilisation was the result of the amalgam of a range of cultures, identities, and earlier civilisations, and a borrowing of themes and priorities. They fused into what we have come to believe — wrongly — as an holistic and monolithic set of values. Today, most Western peoples regard this civilisation as somehow intrinsically bound up with democracy. This is hardly the case, and, in any event, what we call “democracy” today is already different from our description of it even a half-century ago. Our modern democracy would seem anti-democratic to Thomas Jefferson, but would have fulfilled Plato’s prediction that it would, if left to grow, become mob rule: *ochlocracy*.

Societies manage to cope because change mostly occurs at a rate which does not cause great alarm. It may be rapid, but it is evolutionary rather than revolutionary. But many “civilisational norms” *have* changed in the past few decades, such as the expectation that the rule of law would be largely be *respected* rather than require *enforcement*.

Authors such as Elias Canetti<sup>9</sup> have noted that societies function as self-regulating entities (through tools of political correctness, fashion, social and national loyalties, etc.). Increasingly, as the 21st Century progresses, we see that self-regulation may no longer necessarily be the case. Coercion and protection supplant “self-regulation”. Again, societies have taken in their stride this growing, apparent necessity for top-down security enforcement. As I noted in *UnCivilization*, particularly referring to urban societies, “most individuals [as a response to increasing insecurity] choose and prefer the certainty of oppression over the uncertainty and opportunity of freedom”.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> See, Spengler, Oswald: *Decline of the West*. First published in 1918 as *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*.

<sup>9</sup> Canetti, Elias: *Crowds & Power*. New York, 1978: Seabury Press. Originally published as *Mass Und Macht*; Hamburg, 1960: Claasen Verlag.

<sup>10</sup> *UnCivilization* (op cit.), p.121.

As I noted, urbanised societies depend increasingly on the unbroken provision of electricity to facilitate life and all improvements in science and technology.

So the matter of the viability of infrastructure becomes critical, and not just electrical infrastructure. There is a sclerosis in both modern civilisational governance structures and physical infrastructure. And as political and economic models become stressed, we see the declining certainty of the open global trading network and the stability of currencies which underpin it.

It matters little that great achievements *potentially* remain to emerge from the linear progression of existing science and technology. We see all the reports about what great discoveries “will” emerge in the next 10 or 20 years. But not all of them will, in fact, emerge. Many great projects, including some medical advancements, will stop, or have already stopped, like half-completed buildings left to crumble when an economic boom ends.

Of course we will continue to see some exciting progress, even though disruptive technological solutions are appearing less frequently than in the late 20th Century.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, had Roman civilisation been able to continue *its* evolution — as I said in 2006 in *The Art of Victory* — perhaps we could have seen supersonic air travel in the 15th Century<sup>12</sup>. But that civilization *did* collapse.

## Slide 12

Couple this to the marked deceleration of population growth — before decline commences globally — and the potential for disruption or transformation of the social/economic model becomes apparent.

---

<sup>11</sup> André Geim, who won the 2010 Nobel Prize for Physics, said in an article in *The Financial Times* on February 6, 2013: “We are in the midst of a technology crisis. Disruptive technologies now appear less frequently than steady economic growth requires.”

<sup>12</sup> Copley, Gregory R.: *The Art of Victory*. New York, 2006: Simon & Schuster. See page 204: “Had we been able to build on the pivotal lessons of Pericles of Athens in a consistent, unbroken line, it is probable that we could have seen such achievements of the mind as movable type and widespread literacy in the Ninth Century CE, and supersonic flight and space travel in the 15th Century. Today, had mankind not, through lapses of human judgment, failed to observe the lessons of history, we could have achieved a greatness which remains still unimaginable to us.”

So what options do most governments have to sustain national viability and stability in the face of long-term tendencies toward foundational decline?

The physical ability exists for most governments to produce and deliver the basics of survival — food, water, and shelter, and even electrical power — even if they were forced to utilize resources only available within their own borders. That is, of course, if governments choose society interests over leadership interests.

That is not the challenge.

The challenge is represented by the conundrum of *how to pay* — ie: in what form — for the equitable provision of such basics if the economy continues to decline. Because what comes into question in times of stress is not the tangible commodities themselves, but *trust in the mechanisms* to acquire and distribute them.

It is arguably the case that early 21st Century societies are entirely abstract in their economic frameworks. The more wealthy and sophisticated the society, the more abstract is its economy.

Economies are no longer sustained by the direct exchange of essential items (either as barter for other items, or for currency). They are sustained by a *highly* abstract system of trading equivalents, all of which are dependent on *trust*, a delicate psychological phenomenon. And this at a time when the disruptions in most societies are causing *distrust* in governments which are the source of the currency.

Thus, widespread currency collapse is far more possible moving forward than, for example, in periods in the early 20th Century when the concept of currency and credit was less tenuously abstracted than now. But even today, we can see the long-term impact of the currency collapse, around 1908, in Argentina. Argentina, one of the great economic hopes of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, has taken a century to really begin its recovery.

*Currency weakness — or collapse — places all aspects of strategic performance in jeopardy*, particularly the ability to fund and deploy defense forces. Currency crises are

often accompanied by social unrest, which inevitably takes precedence over external defense or strategic power projection requirements.

We have yet to consider the impact on global economies as the world begins to ease off total reliance on the US dollar as the global standby currency, and the possibility of energy transactions, even within this year, starting to also be denominated in *yuan/renmimbi* and *rubles*.

In such an environment, the more basic and isolated societies — those which have benefitted least from the modern era — are likely also to *suffer least* from the impending changes. Poorer, cash-based societies are less vulnerable than wealthy, sophisticated societies to strategic-level cyber attacks.

No-one can foretell the future, but trend lines are emerging. We will see aspects of some of the *truly* ancient cultures, civilisations, and hierarchies re-emerge as identity security becomes a major reaction to the loss of social horizons. In fact, that is already happening. The great case-in-point is the transformation in Ethiopia during the past few months.

In modern societies, horizontal, peer-to-peer communications epitomized by the internet and social media make leadership and vertical hierarchies difficult to sustain.<sup>13</sup> We have created a “horizontal hierarchy”, perhaps better described as the “anti-hierarchy”. In this urban age, then, *leadership is feared*. It breaks the horizontal appearance of harmony. We became happy to live in an age of management. But if electrical power becomes less reliable and cities become less habitable, then historically-natural governance structures — vertical hierarchies — revive.

They always revive when threats emerge. Disruptive leaders emerge when threats revive, and they are dismissed when the threat is defeated.

---

<sup>13</sup> Copley, *The Art of Victory* (op cit.), noted, in Chapter 17 (“Perceptions of Leadership”): “The flattening of hierarchical lines is an inevitability of globalization and the surge of wealth- and technology-empowered individuals, but this lack of social structure — which is akin to a postapocalyptic landscape, in that traditional power structures have been eliminated or damaged — adds to the anxiety people feel as they search for guidance and horizons. It all adds to the genetic impulse of humankind to accept and assign responsibilities for individual and societal survival and victory. And stress mounts when the patterns of assigned responsibilities are changed.”

Even in environments of adequate electricity and connectivity, top-down control of horizontal means of communications — the internet, social media, and cellphones — has helped sustain governance. The People's Republic of China (PRC) is a case in point. Top-down enforcement increases the opacity of policy-level decisionmaking. This opacity brings with it, paradoxically, the ability to rebuild trust in, and respect for, leaders, institutions, and instruments (such as currencies). This is one of the looming challenges for PRC Pres. Xi Jinping.

It could be that if we continue our present reactive wars of the regions against the cities we *could* transition through a period of a social and strategic shaping which would resemble a winding-back to formats recognizable a century and more earlier. That's all part of the identity security trend.

Our recent era began as a sunny confluence of mutually-reinforcing trends which improved human welfare and numerical growth. The next era will unwind those trends.

Declining population levels, *or* declining productivity, leads to a decline in property values. Urban property values, in particular, are the basis for economic leverage and therefore the credit-based economy. Declining population means that urban real estate values decline as supply eventually exceeds demand. Declining population *productivity*, because of a population fractured by non-functioning elements, *also* means that the ability to fund real estate purchases is diminished. In both scenarios, the downward economic spiral accelerates.

Similarly, reduced rural populations affected by reduced demand for agricultural product and higher yield techniques, also leads to reduced overall rural real estate values. In the short term, however, demand for food by China will drive an agricultural resurgence for the coming decade at least, with suppliers ranging from North America and Brazil to Australia and New Zealand, and particularly Russia. This has already begun. Real estate is the basis of leveraging through mortgaging to add funds (via credit) into the economy, thus funding overall economic growth. It is worth stressing that GDP measurement, like all credit-based assessments, is psychological in nature, and subjective.

The great tool of GDP as a means of determining nation-state economic viability has already become brutish, imprecise, infinitely variable in its interpretation. It is underpinned by the shifting sands of currencies of questionable prestige. GDP was designed to fit the rigid structure of the post-World War II-defined “modern Westphalian state”, something which, by the early 21st Century, the urban societies were anxious to dismiss. Vitiating the sovereign nation-state distorts the meaning of GDP and other standards of wealth/power measurement. Whither, then, the objectivity of economic planning?

How governments handle the prestige of their currencies will determine the extent, speed, and relative level of stability of the handling of the present and imminent phases of transition. But that, too, assumes that governments remain in their present form, or some resemblance of the classic, balanced nation-state structure which has evolved since the Peace of Westphalia of 1648.

Modern urbanization created a globalism *philosophy* which has essentially broken down the cohesiveness of the classic (or Westphalian) nation-state. Even the *necessity* of the classic, balanced nation-state has been questioned in what has become a *de facto* world of city-states.

To counterbalance that, history shows that city-states are vulnerable to exercises of physical power from forces which draw their logistics from a more balanced base of agriculture and raw materials. This was demonstrated by Philip of Macedon, when he tired of the sophistry of Delphi, the United Nations of the day. And by such figures as Cesare Borgia, Duke Valentinois, tackling the vulnerability of the city-states in medieval Italy.

Europe of the 16th and 17th centuries was a patchwork of small states, and most of those states have disappeared<sup>14</sup>. Few today even remember them. The 20th Century itself was replete with a new wave of cratogenesis (the birth of nations), as well as cratometamorphosis (the reorganization of states), and cratocide (the murder of states), but the 21st Century will have more examples of all three of these phenomena.

---

<sup>14</sup> See, particularly, Davies, Norman: *Vanished Kingdoms: The Rise and Fall of States and Nations*. New York, 2012: Viking.

There is a widespread misperception that globalization leads to an end to the necessity for a Westphalian-style nation-state. In fact, it is not *globalization*, which has always been with human society in varying forms, but the urban *philosophy of globalism*, which has argued against the need for nation-states, and this has been a phenomenon which re-emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. We have seen it before.

So if the current framework of the nation-state was allowed to collapse by the urban, globalist utopianists, what then?

In reality, many of the present Westphalian-style nation-states will *not*, in fact, be allowed to disappear because, under threat, societies *naturally* return to “nationalism”.

Nationalism was very pointedly vilified in the post-World War II cycle, and was blamed as the cause of war because it was seen as the vehicle of competition between states. This competitiveness, particularly as urbanism rose during the Cold War and post-Cold War periods, was regarded as unnecessary.

And yet, predictably, there has been a response to urbanisation and urban domination or hijacking of the democratic processes. The reactive result has been Brexit, the Trump elections, the rise of nationalist movements throughout Europe, Iran, Ethiopia, Egypt, China, Ireland, and elsewhere. We saw the rise of Russian nationalism back in the 1980s, throwing off seven decades of globalism thinking in the USSR.

Sooner or later, everyone wants their past back. Their *identity*.

### Slide 13

In terms of the endurance of the modern, industrial nation-state, the principal security doctrine for survival and growth must be a “whole of government” strategy in which what we imperfectly call information dominance (ID) plays the umbrella rôle. This embraces physical protection (both internally and externally) by hardening or transforming the electrical grid, and creating autonomous energy zones. It also entails hardening the electronic cyber realm (including space assets). It involves building the “content” (intellectual) substance by enforcing the unity of society and its unity of ac-

tion. It does this by creating cohesive structures and society out of increasingly diverse building blocks.

Information dominance first entails identity security and *identity* dominance. Identity security and identity dominance are the greatest determinants in strategic dominance. In essence, they spell confidence and the ability to resist assaults on values and hierarchies. They enable the projection of *will*.

**25 minutes**

## Slide 14

### **PART IV. Terrorism Morphs Into the Strategic Information Dominance Era**

I want to raise the issue of terrorism so that we can move beyond it. Terrorism has become seen, over the past 17 or so years, as the driving factor of media and public policy, and, as a result, a key driver of military doctrine and training. It is time to move on. Terrorism is a diversionary tactic of indirect warfare. It is employed as a facet of proxy warfare, and we have, for more than two decades, seen major powers choose to use proxy warfare to disguise the innate weakness of their abilities, or confidence, to fight conventional wars.

The reality is that we have been, and still are, in an era of such strategic weakness that proxy warfare has been the driving element of recent kinetic confrontations.

But media-driven hysteria and short-term focus have prevented the media — and therefore leaders and analysts — from seeing the larger strategic terrain, and from laying out a coherent perspective which identifies and prioritizes challenges and opportunities.

*Seemingly* urgent threats, indeed, so obsess us that we have not addressed the strategically-important global terrain; the great trends. Our *de-emphasis* on history, replaced by an *emphasis* on technology and tangible, short-term reward, reduces social horizons to the point where, despite “globalisation”, most societies are actually in a very small, dark, and restricted world of thought. They are, paradoxically, the antithesis of global and open.

It is because we find ourselves *not* looking at the broad horizons that most political leaders, and most national security organizations in the world today are preoccupied with *reacting* to the phenomenon of terrorism, or other forms of proxy warfare which are often incorrectly being labeled as terrorism. *Reaction is not a war-winning strategy or a strategy for national or global leadership.* Reaction is generally the losing hand in any situation. Anyway, most of the combatant societies — including the so-called

terrorists themselves — are unaware of the nature and *real* goals or *real drivers* of the wars in which they are engaged.

Moreover, the massive and clumsy global reaction to, and preoccupation with, terrorism has meant that what is vitally important — the geostrategic transformation of the entire world — has been occurring beneath the surface of consciousness, without real consideration or analysis. It is this underlying transformation which will determine the fate of civilisations and societies. But because the changes move the world into a new and uncharted realm, this process heightens economic and military uncertainty and therefore heightens the need to act carefully. This uncertainty and caution is fueling the proxy strategic wars which involve so-called terrorism, insurgency, and irregular warfare. This process also disguises the breakdown in the way in which warfare *technology*, and (more gradually) warfare *doctrine*, themselves are transforming.

We place great emphasis on technology as the saviour of both military and economic advantage, but *we may not be developing technologies appropriate to the dramatically transforming global environment*. In any event, the pace of technological development may already be slowing overall.

In the meantime, we are largely mired — and wired — into reactive mode. And the process of *reaction*, as we see, diverts societies and governments from articulating and pursuing their own goals through planned *action*. Reaction robs a society of initiative and control over its own destiny. And in the case of proxy warfare, the reaction is against *the supposed symptomatic cause of pain*, rather than addressing the origins of it.

Terrorism itself is a form of psychological warfare, and is designed to divert and paralyze the decisionmaking and priorities of target audiences.

This can cause a substantial impact on the strategic direction and capabilities of the target society.

Successful psychological operations or information dominance (ID) campaigns cause a target society either to move in the wrong direction, act in some instances against its

own self-interests, or merely, through paralysis, allow an opening of strategic opportunity to others, particularly the sponsors and sustainers of the terrorist imagery.

*ID, in psychological and physical terms, is the premier conflict, doctrine and weapon, or international competition methodology, of the coming decades.*

Right now, the world is in transition, a disruptive process which inevitably leads to fluctuating episodes of excessive caution, excessive opportunism, and confusion at governmental levels. Governments tend to cling to known or existing capabilities and resources — legacy systems and doctrine — even if these systems and doctrines are poorly suited to new tasks. But there is a natural hierarchy to the global frameworks.

In this hierarchy regional strategic dynamics are subordinate to, and often caused by, greater global trends, even though we, as humans, tend to focus on, and react to, the issues which we feel immediately threaten or benefit us.

So where are we today? What are the essential trends, visible now, which determine long-term outcomes?

Periods of transition between “rising powers” and “declining powers” have been described in terms of the so-called Thucydides Trap, when fear within a static or declining power (historically, Athens) of a rising power (historically, Sparta) makes war seemingly inevitable. The phenomenon today has been applied not only to the China (PRC)-US dynamic — as has been widely remarked — but to the Middle Eastern imbalance, the “north-south” imbalance, and so on.

But let me caution against reading any sense of inevitability into this, particularly in the US-PRC dynamic. It could well be that the PRC is *not* guaranteed a role as a rising power; the obstacles it faces internally are profound. Moreover, the US strategic resurgence under Trump may be significant. In the meantime, we are in a period of substantial great power *weakness*. And as we seek to find some equilibrium in the “balance of weakness” we find that almost all states project power through proxy forces, particularly including terrorists, *jihadists*, insurgents, and so on.

If you wish to think in terms of Thucydides, then you need to understand that the *sliding vertical scale* of strategic power balance is accompanied by the *sliding horizontal scale* of population volatility and movement. It is characterized by the breakdown of the Westphalian nation-state concept; by so-called globalism; by urbanization and hysteria-driven migration; and by the peaking and imminent troughing of global population numbers.

We now visibly see the prospect of a major power check-mate in the present global game. If the US or the West sees that their major strategic competition is from the PRC, then they need to ally with Russia to contain the PRC. If Russia is seen as the main challenge, then an alliance with the PRC would need to be considered against Russia. But the containment of Russia, or helping the PRC gain dominance over Russia, would greatly strengthen the PRC as a global power.

## Slide 15

Right now, much of the world still concerns itself with the perceived threat of terrorism. It's the specter which dominates the question of the survival of Western civilization. However, it is worth recognizing the reality that *no terrorist phenomenon has ever sustained itself for any meaningful duration — or achieved strategic outcomes — in the absence of support from a nation-state or wealthy society.*

Does anyone really believe that the current phenomenon of “Islamist terrorism” has not been receiving major state support even since before the *al-Qaida* movement? And that particularly includes territory-holding entities such as the “Islamic State” or (briefly) *Boko Haram*. Does anyone believe that the leftist terrorism of the mid-Cold War period was not supported by state sponsors, ranging from the USSR and the People's Republic of China (PRC) and their allies? Does anyone believe that the Irish terrorism of that same period was not also supported by states or societal bodies (including trans-national criminal organizations)?

If we acknowledge that the cycles of terrorism, insurgency, and proxy warfare generally are driven by the discreet support of governments or societies, then we also have to question whether most of those sponsors have calculated — or are even in a position

to calculate — the second- and third-order consequences of their actions. In other words, do most governments which sponsor such actions recognize the long-term impact of what they have done or are doing?

Are Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Qatar, or even the US, cognisant of the longer-term impact of their various levels and timings of sponsorship of Sunni *jihadist* groups over many decades? Unanticipated consequences ripple down the decades. The world is, after all, still living with the effects of the sponsorship of radical leftism which was designed and sponsored in the post-World War II era of Cold War as a proxy movement to oppose Western, free-market industrial efficiencies. It is inevitable, then, that we are starting to see some of the Wahhabist- or Muslim Brotherhood-origin *jihadism* or radicalism — supported by Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Qatar, and the US (and even Iran) — now coming back to bite the original sponsors.

These sponsorships of proxy movements — civil society movements as well as armed movements — are often seen as expedient ways of opposing rival states without apparent consequences because the sponsorship is perceived as having plausible deniability. From a reactive standpoint, target societies need to understand the sponsorship origins of the threat, and how to deal with it.

The sponsor or financier of the terrorist or insurgency threat is the driver of the threat. Deal with that sponsorship and the symptomatic threat diminishes. But then we need to know also what drives the driver.

Today, there is an entire industry in the security sphere which has as its rice-bowl the study and parsing of Islamist ideology and sectarian differences. There was an earlier industry, during the Cold War, which had as *its* rice-bowl the study and parsing of marxist ideology and schismatic differences. The sectarian and schismatic differences *do* have strategic importance, but not because of the differences themselves, or the dialectic in which each social group engages. No, their importance lies in the fact that, as social groups, they represent the *temporary modes of social cohesion*. These enable populations to exist and manage their affairs in their geographic spaces and environments. The doctrines or religious or ideological groupings are a part of the survival logic because they create a political hierarchy.

In other words, ideologies (even ill-conceived ideologies) can keep societies intact because of the power of political correctness to achieve rigid and xenophobic adherence to national or social lines. Here I would refer you to the great writers Elias Canetti, who wrote *Crowds and Power*<sup>15</sup>; and Gustave Le Bon, who wrote *The Crowd*<sup>16</sup>.

Despite rhetoric to the contrary, what we are seeing today is a *balance of weaknesses*, a balance of relatively weak powers (and that includes the People's Republic of China and the United States), which each act with only relative degrees of boldness, when they see an advantage.

This, in turn, means that sovereign governments will continue, perhaps increasingly during this era of transition, to use proxy forces, such as terrorist groups, as their primary forces to achieve strategic outcomes. In some respects, the desired strategic outcome is merely to achieve paralysis or stalemate in a geopolitical arena. But *in almost every instance the guiding hand of such policy is power politics, rather than ideology or theology*.

We spend insufficient time analyzing the core motives of their deep sponsors of proxy forces. We should not focus on ideology and theology; they are carrier waves; they not the message.

Without getting into all the details, it is essential to understand that societies become vulnerable when we see a weakened commitment to the Westphalian balanced, urban/rural nation-state concept. They lose national identity. And it is that loss of identity which drives the search by people to retrieve it. That is why we see people willing to engage in terrorism: so that they can re-discover their identities and re-assert them.

The reaction to uncertainty among national security and governance authorities is to strengthen existing capabilities along known lines. However, the primary line of *societal defense* is an *automatic reversion to a sense of national identity*. This protects the basic elements of national survival, including self-reliance in economic and survival terms.

---

<sup>15</sup> Canetti, Elias, *Crowds and Power*. Op. cit.

<sup>16</sup> Le Bon, Gustave: *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*. Paris, 1895.

It is exactly this reversion to nationalism which is resisted by “modern, democratic societies” which see nationalism as the source of past wars. In reality, it is *anti*-nationalism which is the source of future collapse.

**21 Minutes**

## Slide 16

### PART V. Strategic Will: Back to Fundamentals

Humanity, since it began to walk upright, has had a single weapon: will. The will, or genetic impulse, to survive and perpetuate, requires the necessity to dominate the geography which enables that survival and perpetuation. Everything else — from spears to nuclear weapons — is merely a tool of that will; all other things are *subsystems*, vehicles to support the imposition of will.

We have been confused into believing that the *technological medium* is the message. But the technology (spears, nuclear weapons, etc.) merely facilitates the delivery of willpower dominance over nature, over self and one's own society, and over adversarial societies.

Willpower, or its genetic driver, the survival/reproduction instinct, is embedded in our DNA, but it is directed by the conscious and unconscious actions of the mind. My late colleague, and the father of psychological strategy and grand strategy, Dr Stefan Possony, noted in 1975: "War is waged to affect and alter the will of the opponent. Seen in this light, war's only goal, and its most important method, is psychology rather than accurate shooting."

Psychological strategy — as well as psychological warfare, propaganda, and the like — has become absorbed, along with cyber warfare, into what we are now calling "Information Dominance" (ID). But even that discipline is being interpreted by military practitioners through a narrow lens, in which the medium is still the message. At least now, to some extent, the "medium" has come to include the content substance as well as the technical means of delivery to the target audiences. But it is still essentially a crude tool.

All tools (military, economic, scientific, social, religious, language, etc.) are there to serve the imposition of will.

Any society understands that willpower (and the erosion of it in a competitor) is the key to its success. But success relies on the tools at hand. The modern world has come

to see that the “tools at hand” are mainly large-scale formal military and security forces and large-scale economic capabilities. These are essentially psychologically-weighted coercive forces which perpetuate the power of governments and enable a continuation of social wellbeing.

If we look back at the history of human competition, we can see the evolution from directness to abstractness (indirectness) in the imposition of will. This was largely due to the fact that mediums of communication began as direct face-to-face mechanisms. They were visually-observable phenomena (ranging from displays of force or prestige, to marks on trees and rocks to demarcate boundaries), and included direct speech, and indirect messaging via rumors and deliberately-engendered superstition. This progressed through the use of broader communications voiced via religious pulpits and the control of education and literacy.

But willpower manipulation and imposition gained its greatest single boost with the creation of modern printing methods when, in 1450, Johannes Gutenberg introduced moveable type and mass printing techniques. That laid the basis for rapid, widespread, and deeply-embedded transmissions of ideas, as well as externally-imposed or suggested will. That proved to be the tipping point in moving from direct to indirect psychological domination, and also increased the distance (in terms of complexity) from policy decision to the achievement of will imposition.

From that point forward, there began an increasing preoccupation with the medium and with conscious messaging. In other words, it became preoccupied with the process *rather* than the outcome. It is unsurprising, then, that military institutions, so focused on their processes, structures, and systems (and contrasting them symmetrically with their direct or perceived adversaries) are discouraged from seeing the fundamental objective. And achieving the fundamental objective is a “whole of society” event, bigger than just military outcomes, and bigger even than just government desires.

Like agitprop — agitation propaganda — the use of military or economic weapons relies on physical demonstrations of power to influence the will, or the minds, of target audiences. Even the use in May 2017 of the WannaCry computer virus was a demonstration of cyber power by Kim Jong-Un to Pres. Donald Trump. At best, these expen-

sive sets of physical demonstrations act as a deterrent, enabling goals to be achieved without conflict; at its worst, it results in the uncertain prosecution of kinetic conflict or economic warfare.

These crude instruments of authority are now fragile. Perhaps in some ways they have become *too* abstracted from the basic goals of species perpetuation.

The development of increasingly abstract societies has, of course, enabled wealth growth — and, for a period, lifespan increases — on a scale and shape never before seen in living beings. But what happens if (or when) cracks appear in this house of cards? When we find ourselves using blunt instruments instead of delicate surgery?

By taking a fundamental view of strategic *goals* — outcomes — we can more appropriately develop and utilize the tools to achieve them. What is already clear is that loss of national prestige — a psychological factor — is far more damaging to strategic influence than a declining *physical* capability in military technology. Again, Possony: “Prestige is the credit rating of nations.” This is not to ignore the physical capabilities of systems, but to recognize that, for example, the greatest power of a military structure, or weapon, is its capability to dominate the will of the opponent (or ally) through prestige.

Thus, Information Dominance would perhaps be better described as “willpower supremacy”. But if the goal is clear — and that, essentially, is control over the best paths for survival and reproduction — then the name is immaterial. Today, we should think of defense budgets in terms of the overall contribution they can make to that assertion of societal will. There are many subordinate factors, and part of the clean-sheet analysis should be to debate the respective rôles of each element of power projection. The uniformed military rôle, which is central, should ideally be *less utilized* (although *not* necessarily less visible), to avoid the present temptation to seek military solutions to problems best addressed by less direct mechanisms.

Psychology is the basis of strategy. Perhaps it is not so much invisible as it is intangible and subjective. And military planners hate intangibles. [Recall the maxim at the start of the age of precision weapons: “If it can be seen, it can be hit; if it can be hit, it

can be killed.”] But Information Dominance must include the classical psychological arts, as well as all of the cyber toolkit of weapons and defenses, and it also must factor into force planning the prestige and impact aspects of military operations.

National security and national capability (*will*, transformed into action) must directly engage the science of creating and enhancing societal identity. This includes cultural and linguistic identity security, visible and respected hierarchical structures around which to rally, and so on. And, yes, ID is also about communications mechanisms, and direct and indirect willpower projection tools. Communications infrastructure, as well as communications content, are vital components.

**9 Minutes**

Slide 17

## PART VI. The Current Factors

Let me throw out a few basic observations which I hope will stimulate questions and discussion:

- 1. Global population transformations are creating totally new social, economic, and technology models. They will also transform the way we measure and compare our progress. We are seeing dramatic population declines, population movements, and changes in population cohesion.
- 2. Identity politics, including nationalism and all which that brings, will drive most emerging strategic scenarios. It will, for example, drive how India and China react to their existential threats. Indeed, identity politics just drove the recent change in power in Ethiopia — let alone the political outcomes in Hungary, the US, UK, Austria, etc. — and this has changed the security outlook for the Red Sea/Suez region, and much of Africa. And the phenomenon is just getting started.
- 3. Neither China nor India are likely, in their present forms, to become the strategic and economic center of the universe in the coming decade or two, despite their importance. They will, of course, be critical dynamic elements. The relative position of the West is also yet to be determined, and alliance structures within the West are changing dramatically. Both the PRC and India are beset by threats to their water supplies which could absolutely determine their strategic viability and growth.
- 4. What will emerge will be in harmony with historical patterns. If harmony can be a term appropriately applied to an emerging period which will look, while we're in it, very much like chaos, or at least uncertainty.
- 5. In the very near-term — over the coming few years — it is likely that the PRC's "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR) strategy will have been forgotten as we see multiple belts and roads drive the great East-West trade highway. Already, in May 2017, Beijing itself saw the writing on the wall and ceased calling it "one belt, one road", and simply renamed it the "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI). For good reason: the Trump move with North Korea and the Putin-Abe talks signaled that several new strategic routes and partnerships were emerging, which would strengthen the positions of the US, Japan, Russia, and the two

Koreas. That is already happening, but we now need to turn attention back to the Western containment of the PRC and the now-pivotal geopolitical rôle of the Republic of China — Taiwan — which no-one wishes to discuss.

- 6. Turkey and Saudi Arabia, both geostrategically significant, are facing existential threats to their existence. Both are embarked on “all-or-nothing” gambles by their governments to survive. And in that same region, we see substantial transformations of the region caused by the emergence of dynamic new thinking in both Ethiopia and Egypt.
- 7. Finally, before moving to discussion, we see the reality that virtually all of Africa has been re-colonised, this time without a shot being fired, and this time by the People’s Republic of China. Do we yet understand the impact of this on the global strategic condition? Do we see the linkage between this and the equally stealthy PRC strategic dominance of much of the Caribbean, from Venezuela and Panama to the island micro-states which are being used for strategic purposes? Do we see the almost total domination of the Pacific micro-states by Beijing? Even Beijing’s political stranglehold on Australia and New Zealand? Where does Canada stand on this? Are the long-term outcomes of this geo-strategic change likely to be more beneficial for it than US or traditional Western civilizational dominance?

There’s much more to discuss: the evolving shape of the Middle East and Red Sea; Africa; South America; the transforming Eastern Mediterranean and Balkan regions; the issue of polar resources and the opening of Arctic sea routes; and much more. We can also discuss, if it’s not already a settled issue, the reality that the strategic nuclear age has ended, and look at the place of nuclear weapons in the tactical arena. Let’s open to questions and discussion of all of this.

**Slide 18**

Thank you.

10 minutes

---

<sup>i</sup> Gregory Copley is an Australian, and is the President of the International Strategic Studies Association (ISSA), based in Washington, DC. He is a member of the Advisory Board of the Canadian Forces College Foundation. He serves as an adviser on strategic issues to a number of governments and leaders. He has also helped found a number of other nationally-based strategic studies institutes in various countries, including Australia.

He has authored or co-authored 35 books on strategic and geopolitical issues, history, energy, aviation, and defense; the latest being *Sovereignty in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and the Crisis for Cultures, Nation-States, and Civilizations*, in 2018, and before that *Rise of the RedMed: How the Mediterranean-Red Sea Nexus is Resuming its Strategic Centrality*, and

---

*Pakistan's Metamorphosis: The Defense & Foreign Affairs Handbook on Pakistan* (with Purvis Hussain). He is Editor-in-Chief of *Defense & Foreign Affairs* publications, and the Director of Intelligence at the Global Information System (GIS), an on-line, encrypted-access, global intelligence service which provides strategic current intelligence solely to governments. He drafted the grand strategy framework document for Australia, called *Australia 2050*, in 2007, and another grand strategy book, *The Art of Victory*, in 2006. He authored and edited the encyclopædia, *The Defense & Foreign Affairs Handbook*, from 1976 until the present time, taking it from a 2,500 page print book to an even bigger online publication in recent years.

He has received a significant number of orders and decorations from governments, including, in 2007, being made a Member of the Order of Australia for his contributions to the international community in the field of strategic analysis. He was made a Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographic Society in 2011, and was awarded the Society's Erebus Medal in 2015.

Mr Copley also has had an extensive career as an industrialist, owning several shipyards and engineering companies in the United Kingdom, a naval architectural firm, and a chemical company in France. Among his other activities, he founded Argonaut LLC, a company exploring — and delivering — remote area, mobile energy and water purification solutions. He served as Vice-Chairman of the Scottish national airline, Highland Express.

He can be reached at email: [GRCopley@StrategicStudies.org](mailto:GRCopley@StrategicStudies.org) or at [GRCopley@aol.com](mailto:GRCopley@aol.com).