

Strategic Policy in an Age of Chaos and Opportunity

A Three-Part Presentation

1. Grand Strategy; 2. the Global Condition and Outlook; and 3. a Context for 21st Century Strategic Policy

The Capstone presentation by
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Canada is truly emerging as a global strategic player. It has moved away from the earlier primary focus on its coalition rôle in the Atlantic. Canada is evolving into the Pacific, Asia, and the Arctic. These are the great challenges for it in the 21st Century, every bit as significant for Canada as strategically differentiating itself from its great ally, the United States. The West may have overarching needs to pursue a common civilisational view, but the West itself is no longer cohesive, and its leadership is very much open to contest. The fact that this CFC course — and the College generally — today welcomes foreign students each year already pays dividends for Canada and its allies in this changing world. The current Chief of Army Staff in Pakistan, for example, is a CFC graduate.

We will break our discussion today into the three following areas: an understanding of Grand Strategy; a discussion of the Global Condition and Outlook; and a Context for 21st Century Strategic Policy.

This is my fourth opportunity to deliver the Capstone lecture. It is a great pleasure, as an Australian, to be able to work with Canadian leaders and visiting scholars at such an important time for Canada, Australia, and the world.

You graduates of this seventh National Security Programme are entering the strategic policy arena at a time of massive global transformation. The 20th Century gave us two world wars and 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. But the 20th Century will seem like a stable and predictable age, a natural progression of human society, when compared with the 21st Century. The 20th Century was the logical evolution of the ages of Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution and the triumph of Western civilisation.

The 21st Century could continue to see the triumph of Western civilisational values, because these are actually the structural, or quantifiable, values which have led China and India to relative success as modern states. These values, however, are the values which the West has itself recently let slip into dis-use.

It is worth noting that the decline in US global authority since the end of the Cold War now parallels the decline in British global authority after World War I. Given the acceleration of some activities resulting from new global communications and human tempo, the US strategic decline may be occurring 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; and in 2014, several years ahead of expectations, the People's Republic of China in some respects overtook the US as the world's dominant economy, based on GDP estimates described in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP) ¹, although not yet in regard to global power potential. The US — and Western — lead in the global power arena, however, is now severely threatened, and certainly not just because of Chinese advances.

We are witnessing, too, the transformation of the concept of the sovereign nation-state, the Westphalian model, which began its formal evolution in 1648. But the future is not all about things new. It is also about things old and forgotten: states and cultures old and forgotten, lands and kingdoms old and forgotten; things emerging again, as grievances and allegiances, long thought buried, which now re-emerge. What we see, when organisation breaks down into chaos, is that order re-emerges along very natural lines. Social lines and hierarchies, geographical attachments, and power all gradually return to clarity in fairly

¹ Giles, Chris: "China to overtake US as top economic power this year", in *The Financial Times*, April 30, 2014.

predictable patterns as the dust, inevitably, begins to clear. But there will be much heartache before that clarity re-emerges.

And while today we will also talk about pressing, current issues, what we need to do is to try to paint them within the contextual and historical framework which makes meaningful today's and tomorrow's issues and options. I stress this because without some understanding of several thousand years of history and cultures, what is happening now, and what will happen in the coming few years, cannot be adequately understood or addressed.

*I've brought along a copy for each of you of one of my books. It is called **UnCiv- ization: Urban Geopolitics in a Time of Chaos**. And I've brought several editions of our monthly journal, **Strategic Policy**. These expand on many of the philosophical and topical areas we will discuss today, so I hope you will have time later to read them. They are all about strategic context, and your careers, from this point, will be marked, as I said, by massive contextual change. Attempts merely to continue in a linear fashion the policies and practices of your predecessors will lead to failure. So how do we plan for a future of change, without abandoning the lessons of the past? And without abandoning the core values of our society? I want to start with the strategic philosophical framework, so that we can then discuss current issues with greater meaning.*

6 Minutes

Change occurs constantly, whether in human society or in nature. I want to highlight this, to set the tone for discussions today about how human society as a whole is at an interesting evolutionary point, a real breakpoint. So let me quote the words of Oswald Spengler, who, in *The Decline of the West*, which he wrote between 1910 and 1917, said:

*Up to now everyone has been at liberty to hope what he pleased about the future. Where there are no facts, sentiment rules. But henceforth it will be every man's business to inform himself of what **can** happen and therefore of what with the unalterable necessity of destiny and irrespective of personal ideals, hopes or desires, **will happen**. When we use the risky word*

“freedom” we shall mean freedom to do, not this or that, but the necessary or nothing.

Spengler went on to contrast the cause and effect of the progress of history, and how this creates cycles:

... To birth belongs death, to youth age, to life generally its form and allotted span. The present is a civilised, emphatically not a cultured time-period.

In other words, progress and lifespans are cyclical, and by the beginning of the 20th Century Spengler saw all the signs that Europe and North America had crystallised into rigid civilisation. That phase is passing. It is necessary to realise that we are, in the 21st Century, no longer in an age of *knowledge*, that key component which describes a civilisation We have passed through and beyond that, and we are, once again, into an age of *beliefs*, the descriptor of cultures. We are in that period, as Spengler said, “when sentiment rules”. And a world operating without the dominance of factually- and empirically-constructed decisionmaking must expect to see the end of civilisation, and the return to an age of tribes and cultures and profitless squabbles.

This cannot be stressed too much.

If the political part of our societies in the West continue to function on mere beliefs — leaving the heavy lifting of analysis, science, and production to smaller and smaller components of society — then we are headed even more rapidly into difficult times. In other words, let me start today by asking whether we in the West do still, in fact, have the appropriate “civilisational” approach to maintain our level of progress and economic advantage. I say this because a belief-based approach reflects *cultural* values; a civilisational approach tends to be more about *quantification* and measurable values. To summarise: everything we have taken for granted as the basis of our modern social organisational structure over the past couple of centuries is in the process of change.

To begin with, we have to look at something which is rarely discussed, but forms a momentous reality moving into the mid-21st Century. It is that all strategic planning over the coming decades will be affected by the fact that global human population numbers are beginning a process of peaking before entering a vortex of decline. This process, already underway, will see a concurrent new surge in migration patterns. In many areas, population levels will fall precipitously. Some societies, however, will see a population rise as immigrants flee from economic disaster zones, many of which are being transformed by population decline. Some of this will trigger a further surge in rural-to-urban movement; some of it will be from continent to continent, state to state. In all of this, we will see more changes of borders, more creation and collapse of states — in short, more transformation — than the entirety of the 20th Century. Even the African Union, which had steadfastly stood by the old Organisation for African Unity stricture that colonial borders should remain inviolate, now says that probably all African borders will change in the coming decade or so. And indeed, the African Union itself may not survive.

The context we see today is crowded by urgent policy thinking, pressured by the media. I told the previous two courses, in this room, that in the short-term context we may, for example, see modern Turkey broken up within a decade. Neighboring modern Syria, after all, has now been broken in ways which may preclude restoration of the post-World War II model of the Syrian state. [The same applies to modern Libya and Iraq, and probably to Ukraine, and others.]

We have not even begun to imagine the changes which we will see in the years leading up to, say, 2050. We must remember that we saw the global population explode from 2.5-billion in 1950 to more than seven-billion today. This has been accompanied by — and, indeed, caused by — a massive increase in global wealth and wellbeing and an equal growth in the benefits of science and technology. We were able to comfortably absorb and accept this growth. Indeed, we thought, as a result, that growth in all things — from populations to wealth — was inevitable and desirable.

Desirable it may be; inevitable it is not. As I said, we are about to see population levels reach a peak in the near future. Growth rates are already slowing.

But after the population level reaches its apogee, we can expect population levels to decline fairly rapidly, with a substantial interaction with economic and national management issues.

We are already seeing the start of major changes in global trade, and this will be accelerated with new patterns of energy sourcing and use. Can you imagine the strategic consequences if, for example, all of North America becomes a net exporter of energy, or even becomes a continent no longer dependent on imports of energy? Or if Western Europe becomes freed from energy imports? Or China? I raised this possibility a few years ago to much incredulity. Today it is fast becoming possible. Now, far more existentially pressing is the question of water.

The entire pattern of strategic needs and projection — including trade routes — changes as energy trade patterns change. And they are now changing profoundly. How do the global patterns of power projection and alliances change if the security structure is no longer built around defending oil or gas sources or transportation? We have only been defending oil lines for a century. Perhaps we need to look again at older geopolitical models.

But people keep *moving* at an increasing rate. So, in all of this, those states which have enjoyed balance, stability, and wealth will face the ruin of these attributes through — if left unchecked — that transformative migration which, locust-like, cares not about the society into which it moves, but only for the food and shelter which can be had, even for a short period.

As global population decline begins to bite in a decade or two — and distorts societies — social restructuring and poverty will increasingly drive economic refugees, who are already possibly the most significant factor in population unrest today. This is already happening. As with weather patterns, high-pressure areas of population despair will move into low pressure areas of calm. These great societies on the move are not people with long-term vision. Their action is driven by despair, envy, and dreams. History shows us numerous examples of this phenomenon: the great family-group migrations of Celtic peoples from their original homes East of the Caspian Sea to the lands of

Western Europe and the British Isles in pre-Christian times; the subsequent Celtic Irish migration to the Americas and Australasia in the face of the potato famine; the similar Celtic Scottish migration in the face of the enclosure movement; the movement of Continental Europeans to Australia and Canada after World War II; and so on. Those migratory patterns have had an enduring strategic impact, as did the travels of the Roma peoples out of India over the past couple of millennia, and all of mankind, originally, out of Africa, and so on.

In Germany, we saw in 2013 the Government acknowledge a population level which was 1.5-million less than had been officially believed. In other words, the population has begun to contract, even though it was bolstered over recent decades by the introduction of as many as 16-million migrants.

So the key to strategic success will be to see how the shapes of population surge, decline, and movement are occurring. Strategic power has always been built around factors *other* than population numbers. It is always built around population *viability*. This — the nature of the world and the people in it — is the critical element and contextual soup of our global architecture. This is the grand strategic framework. And we cannot manage the components of our framework if we do not comprehend the whole. Population *viability* is the key.

This brings us to the first of the topics we address today: *the nature and meaning of grand strategy*.

PART I: The Nature and Meaning of Grand Strategy

Grand strategy is not easily defined, and there are no guidebooks to assist in mastering even the identification of the shape of it. To equate it to four-dimensional chess would be to criminally over-simplify its complexity and dynamism. 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.

Grand Strategy is the over-arching framework for the successful creation, maintenance, growth, and defense of a society. It begins with the discipline of

defining, on the basis of a deep introspective and contextual understanding, *the nature and goals* of a sovereign entity — a nation-state, in most cases — into the indefinite future. This discipline then requires that the *processes* also be defined and implemented which actually enable the achievement of the sovereign *goals* and the achievement or preservation of the *nature* of the sovereign entity.

Grand strategy, then, is the defining of aspirations; and the comprehension and management of threats and opportunities, at the largest realistic scale. It creates and manages capabilities to achieve what has been defined. It then implements and defends that process within the fluid context of global change. And that context is, to the greatest degree, outside the control of the single sovereign entity.

It is a multi-dimensional process which must be long-term in its perspective, and broad in its contextual understanding of its own self and society, and of other societies, and of nature, and all of history. But *the process 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. Let me stress here a maxim from *UnCivilization*². It is this: *Preoccupation with process and means is tactical; preoccupation with outcomes and future context is strategic*.

What is critical to comprehend in the grand strategic framework is that *everything* is interconnected. So this move into the grand strategic realm marks the end of your career of narrow-discipline specialisation. Henceforth, you must become a “specialist *generalist*”, as my old mentor and the pre-eminent grand strategist, Dr Stefan Possony, told me.

But with the very acquisition of broad strategic understanding comes responsibility; responsibility to act, and to see the actions required to formulate and implement policies which respond to the evolving mosaic of the global strategic architecture, including the architecture of one’s own society.

² Copley, Gregory R.: *UnCivilization: Urban Geopolitics in an Age of Chaos*. Washington, DC, 2012: the International Strategic Studies Association.

If the context changes, why then should policies not 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.

Put more succinctly: ***policies remain unchanged until destroyed by realities generated by external forces.*** Even victory cannot of its own accord bring policy changes in the victorious societies; indeed, victorious societies are the ones *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 continuation of anti-Russian policies by the West after the Cold War was a case in point. The geography in geopolitics remains constant, but politics remains fluid.

You will be unable to perform the functions of broader leadership (that is, leadership on a national level, or advising national and international leaders) without a clear concept of grand strategy. One of my earlier books, *The Art of Victory*³, defines, in many respects, the goals of grand strategy, but in *UnCivilization*, I noted: “Grand strategy takes, as its basis, a comprehensive view of *that which is*, as well as *that which was*, and *that which may be possible*. It is a view which must be based on a knowledge of which paths through nature and through humanity have been determined over time. We need a *perspective* of the terrain — the mosaic — of the universe and the behaviour of all of nature, including human history.”

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

³ Copley, Gregory R.: *The Art of Victory*. New York, 2006: Simon & Schuster's Threshold Editions.

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.

To expect to have the kind of all-embracing grand strategic vision of the way mankind functions within the natural world is itself a utopian dream. But the fact that complete knowledge or wisdom is elusive does not mean that we should restrict our thinking to the prosaic, or to short-term, narrowly-defined intellectual specialisations.

To summarise:

1. Grand strategy identifies the terrain, and the evolving nature of *patterns* in that terrain: that is, long- and short-term context, the historical dimensions, and the global context and trends, including the nature of one's own society. This provides the *framework of understanding*; the situational context in the largest sense.
2. With a knowledge of the strategic terrain, grand strategy then defines *the national goals* in detail, in the short-, medium-, and long-terms (including the indefinite future), including defining the enduring nature and values — including language — 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. Further, 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 fashionably calling "information dominance" (ID) — is the most important discipline to master, and prosecute with utmost discretion. 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.

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 health-care, 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. And yet, 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.

PART II: The Current Global Condition

Who today thinks that the great competition for global leadership can be sustained merely by continuing to extrapolate current behavior? Who today thinks that Western societies can rest on their laurels with the automatic assumption that their several centuries of dominance will be sustained without effort into the future? Who today does not think that the West is spending at a far greater rate than it is creating? Who does not comprehend that cultures and civilisations — like all living species — have fairly predictable life-spans and ultimately must wither into old age and die, or find ways to re-emerge anew?

I hope today to provoke debate which goes beyond immediate election and budgetary cycles, and beyond consideration of managing current force structure pressures.

For the first time in more than two centuries, the great technological and organisational structures of the security, intelligence, industrial, and innovation

communities of the West may be insufficient to ensure continued Western strategic dominance. That may have to do with the fact that the world is now more prosperous, capable, and ambitious than it was a century ago. Indeed, this modern world which is emerging can be said to be a Western creation. The challenge is that the civilizational architecture which built Western dominance is now very mature in its life-cycle. It has become congested and exhausted, impeding its ability to react to a totally new world. Rome, when it collapsed as a republican hegemonic power, re-emerged and saw its greatest era as an empire. Catalysts, such as the collapse of a society, are the great deciding things in history.

We cannot yet clearly understand the coming catalysts, when great historical trends of population and sociological change, technologies, economics, and resources begin to collide. This uncertainty demands that *current* capabilities, forces, and the matrix of nation-states are maintained on the one hand, while preparing for a world in which *radically new forces and capabilities* and socio-political structures will be demanded. As well, the very nature and efficacy of democracy, as we currently view it, has changed, and will continue to change, or be eclipsed as a brief aberration of history.

Let me lay out some of the framework. It is complex and untidy.

And to begin with, we need to acknowledge that whatever needs to be done to face this new world seems in many ways to be beyond the West's current apparent interest or energy, although not beyond its capabilities. Western societies squabble over the allocation of deckchairs on the *Titanic* after it has struck the iceberg: they think only of the immediate. Strategic policy formed in the hot-house of isolation or immediate self-interest and hubris cannot sur-

vive in the new and more diverse real world. And yet that hot house is where most of the West now resides: it is a cocoon defined by wealth, language, and a habit of dominance. Most Western policy officials, so preoccupied with immediate pressures, have little opportunity to comprehend — and anticipate — the scale and scope of *global context* at a time when that *context* is undergoing change on a scale which has not been seen for a thousand or 1,500 years.

In such a climate of change, national security and intelligence must be viewed in a far more comprehensive perspective than at any time in a millennium. In other words, approaches to both national security and intelligence will need to be re-considered in ways never before conceived.

Winston Churchill once said that the farther one looks back into history, the farther forward one can see into the future. It is particularly true with regard to the strategic policy framework as it relates to national security and intelligence: it is *all about context*, of which history in its fullest sense is a great part.

It has always been true that the broader and deeper the contextual framework of understanding, the more valid can be the formulation and execution of national security policy. We saw, however, that World War II and the Cold War eras locked Western societies into a rigid framework in which they could, for a half-century, safely *stovepipe* thinking, and stovepipe policy, and skill development. That stovepiping, or compartmentalisation, enabled significant linear growth in many areas of science and technology, but at the expense of a broad and long-term strategic perspective. There was, for that half century, little need of *strategy*: the battle lines had been drawn; it was, or seemed, a straight race. There was little to think about. There are many who today would contin-

ue this comfortable path, merely changing the name of the adversary, or perhaps not even that.

We are all, however, prisoners of physical reality. We see the world from where we stand; we understand it based on our own social history and *terroir* (our sense of identity with location, from which all geopolitics derives). And, moreover, we are prisoners of the architecture and infrastructure — including the architecture of our thinking; our doctrine — on which we depend.

The richer we are, the more we depend on the doctrine and legacy tools our society labored to develop over generations. To once again cite Winston Churchill: he said that we shape our architecture and thereafter it shapes us. Today, the West is shaped by the strategic architecture of carrier battle groups, ballistic missile delivery systems for nuclear weapons, by advanced submarine, airborne, and space-based systems. They have served us well, and we were able to compartmentalise national security and intelligence into their own worlds, set apart from society as a whole. This framework the West had created achieved and then sustained global dominance, not only as a result of the capabilities of the component technologies and the manpower formations which operate them, but as a result of the collective prestige which they, and attendant policies, created.

We need to remember, however, that major defense platforms can last a half-century; land infrastructure can last a century or centuries; doctrine can be embedded for a century or more within defense services. We are locked into these systems and formations and the cost of sustaining them. But the strategic climate — the reality of the world — can change overnight. Indeed, it *has* changed overnight.

So our rigid infrastructure has kept us stable, but on a narrow trajectory, unable to easily adapt when *radical* strategies are needed to address a future of transformative change. We must, particularly at such a time, abandon linear expectations as to where society is going.

But back to prestige for a moment: Dr Stefan Possony, the former strategist of the US Air Force, the author of *Strategic Air Power*⁴, and the architect of the Japanese surrender in 1945 as well as the conceptual brain behind the Strategic Defense Initiative, said: “Prestige is the credit rating of nations.” Absent prestige, all is at risk. And we must be aware that the prestige of the West has not been this low since the Turks were at the gates of Vienna in 1683. Even the major intra-Western wars occurring in the years since then did not diminish the West’s prestige to the point where it now languishes.

And as we ponder the fact that economic and political realities have changed the global landscape let us look at a half-dozen of the more fundamental framework issues.

In *UnCivilization*⁵, which I finished in late 2012, I projected that urbanisation and the realignment of the global architecture would mature in the coming few decades, and also that:

1. Global population growth has reached its apogee, and the global population will begin to decline precipitously within, say, 15 years. In the meantime, global population *movement* will *increase* dramatically, a process already underway, transforming the identity and capability of

⁴ Possony, Stefan T.: *Strategic Air Power: The Pattern of Dynamic Security*. Washington, DC, 1949: Infantry Journal Press.

⁵ Copley, Gregory R.: *UnCivilization: Urban Geopolitics in a Time of Chaos*. Washington, DC, 2012: the International Strategic Studies Association.

most states. Population decline, given present knowledge of trends and patterns, is likely to be massive, but geographically uneven. Yet even if the population was to decline by 50 percent from a high of around eight-billion — and it probably will not reach that level of decline — it would still be 1.5-billion more than the global population of 1950, when 2.5-billion souls wandered the earth. But while population decline occurs globally and unevenly, transnational and intra-national population *movement* will — as we discussed earlier — increase dramatically, and urbanisation will compound. These factors alone will lead to massive economic consequences, social unrest, and challenged food production and water quality, as well as declines in the quantity of the breakthrough or disruptive technologies created.

2. In the shorter term, yes, the West *is* in global strategic decline, and China *is* on the rise, but these phenomena are not cause and effect, and may change. China's rise is challenged by an array of domestic factors, mostly water-related. Anyway, strategic strength is *not* determined by population numbers but by *population capability*;
3. Global nuclear warfare is no longer efficient, as all technological ages are ultimately overtaken. Cyber warfare is far more capable of strategic impact than nuclear weapons, which are now essentially theater weapons. And most of our other strategic weapons are being rendered obsolete by newer technologies. Having said that, cyber weapons lack the compelling *visible iconography or prestige* of kinetic systems and major platforms. Certainly, nuclear weapons will retain theater efficacy and

may themselves be useful in the cyber spectrum through the use of electro-magnetic pulse operations;

4. As noted, the *pace* of creation of disruptive, or breakthrough, technologies, necessary to support mankind, has slowed unacceptably, and this will compound the growing divergence of economic and social high- and low-pressure areas. Of course we will still see some significant transformative technological breakthroughs, and it is possible that any one, or combination, of these could re-set the strategic race in some respects;
5. As a result of some of these factors, the next major area of global wealth, beyond energy, telecommunications, computing, and aerospace, will be water infrastructure and technology on a massive industrial scale. New water purification and desalination technologies are already on the horizon;
6. In the shorter-term, the global pattern of alliances has changed dramatically, and will change even further. We will discuss that more in a moment. This process of change is being compounded by a refusal in the US to see that it is no longer “business as usual”, and that it can no longer expect compliance by “junior partners”. As I noted in *The Art of Victory*⁶, loyalty goes from junior partners to senior partners, and when the senior partner falters strategically — and yet continues to act imperiously — the junior partners start to re-evaluate their positions. That is now happening.

⁶ Copley, Gregory R.: *The Art of Victory*. New York, 2006: Simon & Schuster Threshold Editions.

These are short-term trends, out to perhaps 2035. Within them are the seeds of the destruction of the urban “city-state” mentality which arose after World War II, and which eroded the viability of the Westphalian state model — the balanced nation-state of urban and rural capabilities; essentially the truly sovereign, self-sustaining society — which had served so well since about 1648.

If we can foresee all of that within the short- to medium-term, how then do we position ourselves to see beyond the coming couple of decades of chaos?

Right now, we are the captives of electricity. The minute-by-minute dependence on electricity absolutely governs the survival of all urban societies.

But beyond our age of electricity is a new, infrastructural age of industrial water. There is a clear relationship between hydroresilience and electroresilience in modern society, and our electricity and water dependencies are becoming more stark and brittle as urbanisation entrenches and our existing infrastructure fails and water quality becomes questionable.

Within the framework of competition between the People’s Republic of China and the US, it may be that the outcome will be decided or driven by that question of hydroresilience: the ability to meet national-scale water needs. And if conflict erupts, then the issue of electroresilience — the ability to withstand cyber warfare and sustain information dominance — will be the decisive issue.

Let’s look at the new strategic patterns which have been evolving.

The Treaty of Westphalia, and then the Industrial Revolution, began the modern era of standing armies and formal warfare. This had, of course, been seen before, when such processes enabled the Egyptians, the Romans, and the Ma-

cedonians — and, of course, Sun-tzu's Chinese formations — to dominate strategically. The modern iteration, however, saw the Western-dominated world build very formal nation-state structures coupled with the very formal separation of military power from other state strengths. Even the concepts of "total war" began to take on different meanings in times of absolute desperation during the 20th Century.⁷

Before the recent era (and I describe that era as being from about 1600 to 1990) there had been long periods when conflict was less clearly defined; sometimes it was an élite affair; sometimes a feudally-based system (such as the conflict which saw the successful Conquest of England in 1066).

What we are seeing emerge *now* is the blurring of the Westphalian nation-state concept and therefore in many ways the blurring of the process of formal military-to-military confrontations.

This has been decades in the making.

Even the Vietnam War saw large elements of this; as did the war against the Afrikaner rule in South Africa; and so on. Within this process, we have seen *irregular* conflict become more and more strategic, and terrorism morph into other forms of unconventional conflict (and also becoming more strategic). *In other words, non-state elements have become both strategic in their objectives and capabilities, and correspondingly more difficult to confront with conventional force structures.*

At the same time, just as all weapons are ultimately eclipsed, as we discussed, we have seen nuclear weapons now supplanted as strategic weapons by cyber

⁷ Ludendorff, Erich. *The Nation at War*. Hutchinson, London, 1936. (= "Der Totale Krieg")

warfare and related elements of information dominance (ID) operations. But what is difficult to embrace, from a policy and threat analysis standpoint, is the *amorphous and ambiguous nature* of cyber warfare and information dominance. So the decisive weapons are no longer carrier battle groups or nuclear weapons, but cyber and ID weapons which are difficult to visibly demonstrate as iconic, prestigious deterrent items. It is doubtful if carrier battle groups and nuclear weapons were ever, since World War II, the *decisive* tools of victory in other than prestige, political coercion, or deterrence terms. Of course progress continues within the formal military sphere. There are a number of evolutions of countermeasures to formal military weapons, such as the railgun technology, which may extend the survivability and life of carrier battle groups, for example. But perhaps not: the PRC is already testing hypersonic weapons – such as the Wu-14 maneuverable hypersonic system – to challenge the railgun threat.

But in simple terms: the world is becoming less structured, and will remain fluid for some time.

The Western concept of structured warfare, as we have seen in the past decade, is less capable of managing or deterring these threats.

Modern threats, including cyber or information-induced economic collapse or distortion or leadership paralysis, can be initiated and sustained to some degree through disguised sponsorship — in the same way that terrorism is usually sustained — and the impact is on *society as a whole*. These threats, then, are less structured, or formal, than those of the past century. Response, therefore, needs to be from society as a whole, and this is difficult, because of

the breakdown of the definition of the balanced nation-state. National identity and cohesion can no longer be guaranteed.

So, in even simpler terms: *More structured world, more structured warfare; less structured world, less structured warfare.*

All of these factors, of course, beg the question as to how we formulate national security and intelligence policies and capabilities today, and for the coming few decades: the period of growing uncertainty and instability. If we harken back to the issue of context, it is clear that, for example, we cannot any longer afford to structure the great preponderance of our intelligence skills and assets simply on what we used to think of as “main targets”. During the Cold War, it was easy for the West to focus 95 percent of its skills and assets on the Soviet *bloc* threat, and for the Soviets to focus a significant proportion of their capabilities on the West. Actually, the Soviets, having to outflank the West, spent a great deal more of their intelligence and indirect skills on the flanks, which is why today, for example, Moscow is faring better than Washington in its abilities to understand and benefit from relations in the Middle East, Africa, and even other parts of the globe.

Today, Western nations — and particularly those within the UKUSA Accords (the US, UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) — have moved heavily toward technically-gathered and processed intelligence. Understanding the strategic context is not even considered. Of course, the use of meta-data in determining, for example, operational targets in irregular warfare — such as against the *Boko Haram* insurgency in north-eastern Nigeria or the Islamic Caliphate (DI’ISH) war in Syria and Iraq — *could* be immensely valuable. But there is a tendency to believe that, as the threats and operating terrain de-

grade and fracture into a blur of social and geopolitical settings, we can fall further back into our bunkers and close down completely on any attempt to understand either our allies or our adversaries.

Already, the US and the West in general is finding that this is the route to strategic failure.

As a result, the US hardly even comprehends, for example, that it has caused itself to lose its old alliance structures in the Eastern Mediterranean, Red Sea, and Arabian Peninsula/Horn of Africa region. This is hardly an inconsequential area: quite apart from energy, the Suez/Red Sea sea line of communication — the SLOC — is still one of the most critical linkages in the world and is the key to the Indian Ocean, which in turn is the dynamic key to the Pacific. Right now, Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, and Kuwait — while perhaps pining for the days of warmth with Washington — have abandoned the US and have formed their own strategic *bloc*. We may soon see Ethiopia, rejoined with Djibouti, added to that *bloc*. And yet during the time of the Richard Nixon Presidency (1969-74), the US had been able to balance and support all of the disparate elements, including managing strategic relations with Iran and Saudi Arabia simultaneously. The PRC has jumped firmly into that region, and has begun to act with skill and vision; it has committed to major maritime basing — including naval basing — in Djibouti, Gwadar (Pakistan), and Lamu (Kenya).

Despite this, in the Middle East and Western Indian Ocean, the US runs a policy campaign which merely mirrors the uninformed media approach. That is that the existential life of the planet somehow revolves around doing a deal with Iran just to stop it acquiring nuclear weapons. This is supposed to be a

national security policy? Those of you who have read Possony's *Strategic Air Power* manual on nuclear warfare will understand that the debate about Iran — whether in the US, or in Israel — usually fails to comprehend the actual nature of nuclear warfare. Certainly the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps leadership has read widely on nuclear strategy.

Meanwhile, the tentative Iran “nuclear” deal of April 2, 2015,⁸ does *not* stop Iran gaining nuclear weapons. But it does have other, unintended consequences of global significance.

What *are* the realities with regard to Iran's nuclear weapons and strategic military capabilities?

- Iran already has a small stockpile of externally-acquired nuclear weapons (from Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea: DPRK).⁹
- Iran, working with its key ally, the DPRK, has already built and detonated (on February 12, 2013) a nuclear weapon of Iranian design and manufacture.¹⁰
- Iran has sufficient technology and knowledge to build nuclear weapons, regardless of the new treaty; ramp-up time to production is effectively zero, the only question, for sustained production of weapons, is the volume of enriched material available.

⁸Between Iran and the P5+1: People's Republic of China, France, Russia, UK, and US, as the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council, plus Germany.

⁹ See: “Iran Acquires Nuclear Weapons And Moves To Provide Cover to Syria”, in *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy*, 2-1992, and later reports by Defense & Foreign Affairs.

¹⁰ See: “DPRK Nuclear Detonation Was Almost Certainly For Iran”, in *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy*, 2-2013.

- Iran, like the DPRK, has developed ballistic missiles and command and control systems to deploy nuclear weapons through to a second-strike capability.

But, equally, the reality is that Iran has placed its strategic hopes on nuclear weapons solely for deterrence and prestige purposes (and these purposes are interrelated). The *warfighting* aspects of its nuclear weapons are limited, but do exist, particularly if Iran acts in a manner which would be perceived as irrational: that is, if Iran initiated a nuclear attack even in the knowledge of proportional retaliation. That is the stated fear of Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, but the real prospect of an Iranian nuclear strike against Israel — knowing Israel's response — is considered almost non-existent by Iranian military planners and by most serious Israeli strategists.

Iran's *real* strategic capabilities lie in cyber warfare, and fluid semi-conventional and indirect warfare capabilities.

Here is the reality: Iran spends about \$9-billion a year on defense, most of it going to the Revolutionary Guard; Saudi Arabia spends more than \$80-billion a year on defense.¹¹

Why is it that Iran can dominate that entire region at present? It is because it functions indirectly, using a broad spectrum of capabilities and innovation which succeed even when the Iranian economy is stressed, when its own population is divided, and when its leadership is corrupt, mutually antagonistic, and ailing. Iran, and to a degree Russia, are succeeding in achieving strategic goals through a more creative, indirect approach to conflict.

¹¹ "Indo-Pacific: Rivalry Between Budgets or Doctrine?", in *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy*, 3-2015.

So the “deal” to curb Iranian nuclear weapons production was essentially meaningless from the standpoint of the stated exercise. Tehran has a strategic rationale for acquiring nuclear weapons. It is unlikely to relinquish this as long as nuclear weapons are in the grand strategy matrix of the region.¹² In any event, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that Tehran surrendered nothing in the deal; in substantive terms, he was correct. In the meantime, however, Turkey is well advanced in its nuclear weapons planning, just as it has, in the past, undertaken considerable chemical and biological weapons research. Saudi Arabia, too, has been jolted from its thinking that Pakistan’s nuclear weapons would also protect the Kingdom, and is now contemplating the cost of its own nuclear programme.

But what the April 2, 2015, P5+1 agreement with Iran achieved was the prospect of Iran having greater freedom of movement from Russia, on which Tehran depends. Tehran is fully conscious that Moscow is also in a strategic alliance with Turkey, Iran’s most significant adversary. Moreover, by reducing US-led trade sanctions on Iran, the Iranian economy and society will open up dramatically. This comes at a time when the clerical governance structure is already transitioning (as “Supreme Leader” “*Ayatollah*” Ali Hoseini-Khamene’i’s era is coming to an end). Iran will almost certainly emerge as a key Indian Ocean-Northern Tier power, and political power *inside* Iran will gradually — because of the growing power of the private sector and military — move away from the highly corrupt administration of the clerics.

¹² See, Homayoun, Assad: “The Indian Ocean Shapes Up as the Dynamic Nexus of the 21st Century”, in *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy*, 2-2015, noting that “Any deal short of leaving Iran a potential nuclear state will not be accepted by Iran.”

Will this cause Moscow to bolster Ankara as a back-up to ensure its southward access? Probably. Meanwhile, the US almost certainly will not be able — as it did during the Nixon era — to create a balance between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Or between Iran and Turkey. So Washington's next step will be to attempt, with Turkey, to pry Egypt away from its new alliance with Israel, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the UAE. Will Turkey, at some stage, finally break with Washington, and possibly NATO? More likely, NATO will itself fall into disuse, like the Western European Union, or, at best, NATO will finally expel Turkey when Ankara goes one step too far in its anti-Western agenda. We await the consequences of Turkey's June 2015 parliamentary election.

All actions have consequences. This time, the cat is among the pigeons. In the meantime, Moscow is, with its incredibly nuanced management of relations with Iran, Turkey, and Israel, conducting a master-class in diplomatic and strategic juggling.

It is possible that one of the consequences of all of this over the next decade could well be the creation of an entirely new and vast Middle Eastern marketplace, an interactive trading zone from the Eastern Mediterranean – even the Atlantic – to the Indian Ocean. What *is* true, and yet unacknowledged today, is that the Arab-Israeli dispute seems to have disappeared from the mainstream Arab psyche. The cause of a Palestinian state is now only the political catspaw of Iran, Turkey, and the US, and *not* of the other regional states (with the exception of Qatar). Only a few years ago, the so-called Arab-Israeli dispute was seen to be unresolvable because of religious and ethnic issues. This is no longer the case, given Saudi Arabia's, Jordan's, the UAE, and Egypt's alliance with Israel. Why not, then, look a few more years down the road to the resumption

of the 2,500 year old ties between Israel and Iran? This is not only possible, but probable.

But here is the pivotal reality of the past few months: *The Arab-Israeli war is over*. That does not mean, by the way, that Israel is free from threats.

What we are seeing, in essence, is a great period of transformation, not just in the Middle East, but in North America, the Indo-Pacific region, the Americas, and so on.

In the Indo-Pacific, we are seeing a significant new alignment of Australia and Japan, possibly to expand to include Canada, emerging — with Washington's blessing — to compensate for the fragility of the US position in the Indo-Pacific. The new framework may take a decade to solidify. By then, China's position for either growth or decline will probably be clear. So, too, will be Australia's position, which is now perhaps more challenged than at any time since Federation in 1901.

But what will the US do in the meantime? Will, for example, the US and its allies have in place a realistic Asia-Pacific position which stabilises the ASEAN waterways, and revitalises the First Island Chain strategic line to protect the sea lanes of Australia, and from the Indian Ocean, up to Japan and South Korea? Will the PRC no longer need its South-East Asian searoutes as much, given the construction of the new Silk Route and the overland routes up through Iran and Pakistan, linking to the PRC asset bases in the Middle East and Africa? That infrastructure — particularly with regard to the Karakoram links between Gwadar and the PRC — took a great leap forward this year.

In this timeframe, too, population and water issues will, as we have touched upon, develop into new paradigms.¹³

We forget at our peril, too, that politics is 100 percent about population strategy, even though we pretend it is not. And as populations become more and more urbanised, we see dramatic changes in the way they — urban societies — think and function. I covered much of this in *UnCivilization*.

What we must do now is comprehend that strategic intelligence is going to be increasingly about understanding the kind of contextual issues posed by population groups, which was something we did not *need* to understand for much of the 20th Century. The meta-data so favored by current intelligence wonks is tactical and short-term; it does not greatly assist in comprehending the changing global framework. Strategic policy formulation will increasingly be based on understandings of humanity which far transcend computer-driven analysis. Computer-driven statistical analysis is the ultimate abstraction of civilizational values, which are about quantification. But we also need *cultural* values, which speak of aspects which are *not* quantification-based, but which are wisdom-based.

In any event, the changing global framework will drive the creation of longer-term national security policies, whether consciously or not, including the shaping of the force structures, technologies, and doctrines. These will be required to meet a very different world, a world which is coming soon to a theater near you.

¹³ Copley, Gregory R.: "Water Technology and Infrastructure at an Industrial Level: The Next Source of Strategic Dominance", in *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy*, 3-2015.

SO: we have plunged unready into an epoch of great change. We need not categorise this as good or bad change, only that the terrain is shifting rapidly, and we need to understand it if we are to cope. Change is inevitable, and mostly — as has been the case until a year or so ago — it is *disguised change*. As a result, we must very consciously learn to recognise the changes and be prepared to modify our approaches accordingly. Sudden change is easy: to be faced with *à fait accompli* leaves us with no choice but to adapt; gradual change allows us to rationalise our responses and this causes us to delay our adaptation, often fatally.

What, then, is the great change we now face, apart from the global demographic shift in human population? It is the retirement of the US and the West from focused strategic management of their global posture. This has accelerated the pace of transformation of the worldwide architecture of power.

None of what we see emerging was inevitable.

We all recall former US President Ronald Reagan's maxim of "peace through strength". This was merely a variant of the older truth: if you seek peace, prepare for war; or Teddy Roosevelt's maxim: speak softly and carry a large stick. The US, and the West generally, forgot this emblematic truth the moment Ronald Reagan retired from the Presidency in 1989, and three subsequent US Presidents — George H. W. Bush, William Clinton, and George W. Bush — failed to understand the truths which Reagan innately knew. At the end of the Cold War, they let the victory slip into a sordid bacchanal of entitlement and political self-indulgence, and urban societies' absolute dependency on government.

By the time Barack Obama won the US Presidential elections of November 4, 2008, the new President's commitment to US withdrawal from global power had resonance with the US electorate. That position remained, four years later, with Obama's re-election in the November 2012 polls. But at the time of his first election in 2008, I said that his commitment to reduce defense spending and to reduce US global strategic leadership, would result in the US having to speak more loudly to compensate for carrying a smaller stick. I wrote, in November 2008:¹⁴

“The ostensibly non-belligerent Obama Administration will attempt to utilise coercion and naïve guile to retain US strategic credibility and power. ... [But] the states of the world are going their own way. They will play with the US when it suits them. They will look Washington in the eye, and turn away when they wish. As the US ability to build security coalitions (or to retain them in, say, Afghanistan or Iraq) declines, US diplomats will become more strident, and yet more ineffective, in their pressures on onetime allies and foes. Their coercive powers will be seen, increasingly, as having been vacated. This is how ‘the West’ dissipates.”

No matter which society achieves dominance of the global strategic architecture by 2050 — three-and-a-half decades hence — it will be on the basis of many factors not yet fully in the forefront of thinking.

¹⁴ Copley, Gregory R.: “Continental Drift: Heartland Power Revives”, in *Defense & Foreign Affairs Special Analysis*, November 7, 2008, and also in *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy*, 10/2008.

And yet nothing has changed materially in the world: the lands remain essentially unchanged; the resources still abound. The United States of America retains as great a wealth in its natural resources as it did two decades ago; Canada and Britain similarly; the Democratic Republic of Congo, too, could boast more intrinsic wealth *per capita* than most states. No: What has changed is not the physical reality, but *perceptions and self-confidence*, and the artificial infrastructures of laws and social guidelines.

That dominates everything.

Now, the future is very much open to be seized. The current global framework and *current concepts of state systems* are at a point of maturity and (in many respects) structural exhaustion, unlike the vigorous 20th Century when they were still being decided. Again, it must be stressed, concepts are psychological artifices.

That does not mean that all present technologies, all values, all wealth, all power will cease their worth, or their ongoing evolution. Only that the framework is changing and the names may change.

In any event, it appears that “The Age of the West” has ended. This may be a passing event, a high-water mark on the wall of history, which will be seen only in retrospect. But it matters, because everything — the language of power, the worth of currencies, the structure of logic — will all gradually change. It was relatively easy when power drifted *within* what we called “The West”: the dominant languages gradually narrowed down to one or two; the dominant currencies narrowed down to one or two; the inherent patterns of legalisms narrowed down to variations on a common theme. Power and technology

came down to a structural logic developed, in the West, around “NATO standards”.

What new age follows will not necessarily, then, be some mirror of the recent epoch, for there was no cataclysmic battle and defeat from which to rebuild: only decay and collapse from the weight of greed, folly, and systemic sclerosis.

Its end, as expected, follows quickly on the realisation that something has vanished from the West.

To many, the change has come painlessly in an opiate cloud of individual wealth and self-obsession. And who would know it? The world still rotates on its axis. Those in the West must know that they inhabit a world already dead: they call out into the void and there is no reply, nor even echo. Their words are lost in the silent winds; they command no more obedience, no more craven respect. And yet the world still rotates on its axis. And new things come to amuse those on their voyage across the River Styx. Those voyagers still, for the moment, eat at the appointed hours, and well. The magicians still conjure new technologies for their amusement and benefit, perhaps at a slower pace than in recent times.

So what has changed? What does it matter? And who shall rise upon the ruins? Could it be a “New West”?

With time and wealth, leadership withers, sclerotic with the fats of success, and then attempts to stave off competition by inhibiting freedom. Thus do societies fall into declining ability and into vulnerability. As the West did, in its attempts to limit both societies and leaders, and preventing the competition for excellence.

Political leaders were inhibited by calls for accountability, but this did nothing to curb corruption, and merely encouraged a tangential circumlocution in maneuvering to retain power and privilege. Economic and scientific innovation were equally inhibited by that legislated “accountability” in the name of fairness, and this merely discouraged risk-taking, innovation, and true leadership, and created a class of lawyers and accountants designed to exploit the legislation to sustain profits.

This is not to say that what today passes for libertarianism is, alone, the answer to the West’s dilemma. Libertarianism demands that the strictures on individual liberty be minimised, but denies that human demand for hierarchy and the need for that vanity of leadership coupled with group and individual identity security which is critical to sustain competitiveness at an inter-societal level.

Many will deny that the West is dead, even though we have yet to have the debate as to what, indeed, constitutes “the West”. Can we declare dead a body which we cannot even identify? Perhaps. Perhaps not. But something is old and beginning to decay. And what is new is not necessarily “the East”. Nor the “anti-West”. Russia, and the People’s Republic of China, and the Republic of Korea (for example) do not hold ideals which are, in fact, antithetical to “the West”. Their patterns of behavior, and their markets, are deeply familiar to the West: they consist of people prospering because they trade their skills and labor for wealth. Was this not the “Western ideal”?

China may yet suffer the same fate as the West. Indeed, it must. All cultures eventually become civilisations or subsume into civilisations; all civilisations have life cycles. What China was, as an ancient civilisation, became, on several

occasions, exhausted by its laws and bureaucracies and collapsed and had to be rebuilt, by this or that rival from within or without. The China of today still carries all the DNA of that complex past, and particularly its cultures, but has re-emerged — and its cultures brought together again — as a new civilisation, one in which the hallmarks of success are those traits for which “Western civilisation” provided the formats.

The same today is true of Russia.

Despite their defining cultural characteristics and their individual geographies, China and Russia function on models which are readily identifiable through history, including the history of “the West”. Their strength right now is what they *lack*: constrictingly artificial attempts to define “fairness”.

The pattern is clear. The things which confine and those which motivate are mostly *psychological* aspects and they either limit or free individuals and societies. In the physical sense, what can limit or free societies is the degree of dependence on infrastructure. This, in most instances, equates to dependence on government. In this regard, urban societies are more dependent on some key elements of physical and social infrastructure than rural societies. Thus, as Westphalianism ends and urbanisation rises, the notion of free and flexible — and creative — societies degrades.

Could the West revitalise itself and restructure its strategic power and influence as it did in the days around the end of the Cold War? Could it, in other words, regain prestige, and therefore regain the currency of power and influ-

ence? Without question. The real question to ask is how long it takes to build prestige.¹⁵

The source of this re-found power would be in the minds of its population. A large tract of that population, however, is narcoleptic with the cheap opiate of stability, benefits, and immediate gratification; another large tract is paralyzed by depression. It is possible that only the collapse of the structures awakens societies to their peril.

And make them look across the Rubicon for a Cæsar and his legions?

There are many major issues we could dwell on today, and each is worthy of a seminar or a full course of study, so I will push out to you just some points which I hope will provoke questions. If I miss something you wish to discuss, please raise it in our discussion period, because there is so much which could alter the course of history over the coming decades.

In a moment, I'm going to raise those few points to get the discussion going. But first, let me preface those remarks by reminding you of my opening premise: that *we are now back in an age when beliefs are regarded as more important than knowledge*. What this means is that, as science and technology gets more and more complex and outside the comprehension of the average person, it is easier to adopt "politically correct" beliefs rather than try to understand the new knowledge. This is exacerbated by living in cities, where people in the "dependent society" have less and less incentive to think for themselves; rather it is easier to just rely on the government and whatever it says, or the media (and there is, organically, a symbiosis between the two). After all, governments are the masters of generating "beliefs" for the masses, even

¹⁵ See, Copley, Gregory R.: "Can Prestige, Once Lost, Be Reconstituted?", in *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy*, 4-2015.

when they do it badly. For governments, information dominance comes naturally because of the hierarchical structure which ennobles elected leaders with a sense of authority.

Let's look, then, at those current issues on which I can expand during the discussion period.

1. A major new strategic *bloc* is being created in the Middle East, consisting of Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the UAE, Kuwait, and possibly Ethiopia-Djibouti, with links to Cyprus and Greece, and the absence of the US and EU in all of this;
2. A new Australia-Japan alliance is being formed, and the prospect exists of Canadian participation in this. To comprehend this we will need to see that the Indian Ocean is the dynamic pivot between Europe, Africa, and the Asia-Pacific zones. This adds to the weight and links of the new Middle East/Mediterranean *bloc* and Australia's and South Asia's roles;
3. The Ukraine crisis continues to have a profound and negative impact on Europe, Asia, US influence, NATO, and so on, and persists down a path toward strategic polarisation of East and West, and on to chaos;
4. The prospect is clear for PRC strategic expansion, both in East Asia and in space, as well as in its rôle as global power, but there are major internal, structural threats to China's position. We need to parallel this with a view on India's strategic ambitions, capabilities, and limitations;
5. The Syrian conflict is being resurrected, not just by the Islamic Caliphate position, but by driving desires in Ankara, Washington, Doha, and Riyadh, and it contains the seeds of ongoing trouble for Turkey and Saudi Arabia in particular. Despite the clerics, Iran is once again becoming a major power and its commitment to Syria goes beyond religious divides;

6. The strategic importance of Africa is changing, including the prospect of the creation of a revived Red Sea maritime power, Ethiopia, and the impact on the Red Sea/Suez SLOC of the Yemen conflict. Indeed, this must also be linked to the growing importance of the Indian Ocean strategic theatre. China has grasped this fully;
7. Implicit in the overarching framework is the ongoing impact of urbanisation and population trends, and the now-critical delicacy and balance of global hydroresilience and electroresilience;
8. The post-nuclear era is fully upon us, and we are into the cyber warfare era (and I will also get into that in the next session);
9. We need to understand why the next wars will, or should (if they are to be successful), be fought differently. We need to see the consequences on Western warfighting of the failure to achieve strategic victory in Iraq and Afghanistan;
10. We have to be aware that we have seen the end of Atlanticism and the *de facto* creation of new heartland and maritime *blocs*, and what this all means;
11. We need to understand the continuing strategic decline of the US and the EU, and the prospects for their recovery. Globally, in fact, we see the new flattened hierarchy of societies — a consequence of new communications technologies — heightening dissent and frustration with governments;
12. We need to ask whether the continuing global economic weakness has longer-term ramifications and, indeed, factors which may make economic recovery difficult in the terms we have come to expect;
13. What is the impact of what is now a major transformation in global energy trade patterns?; and

14. What is the prospect for a major war involving Iran and Israel, and the impact of the US-Iranian nuclear talks? Are we fixating on simplistic Sunni-Shi'a rifts when what we should be looking at are classical geopolitical and civilisational differences?

So, in summary, all of the sense of normalcy which pervaded the Cold War years has now gone. We will see boundaries change and new patterns emerge; they are already emerging. 2015 is not expected to be a year of "big wars", largely because most societies in the world are at a point where they lack the basic resources to sustain such activities on an inter-state scale. This will not prevent "short, sharp wars", or clashes between sovereign powers, and the danger always exists that these can escalate, regardless of the preparedness levels or economies of the parties. A likelihood exists that the depressed, or even desperate, economic and social conditions of some states will exacerbate domestic unrest to the point of civil war. Nigeria had fallen into this category, but so do many other states. Now, indeed, Nigeria is emerging from its crisis.

The strategic consequences of an implosion in such states as Nigeria are profound, and, as noted earlier, the "major powers", such as they are at the moment, cannot think of intervening in their conventional heavy fashion if they hope to stabilise the situations. As a result, wars will have to be fought very differently in the coming decades than they were in the past.

What we have learned from the events we see laid before us now, and what has occurred in the past decade of conflicts, is that *the very nature of conflict has now changed in many respects*. The fundamentals you have learned from Sun-tzu, von Clausewitz, Jomini, Liddell-Hart, and others still apply. But we will see over the coming decade that unless the great, and formal, military powers begin to learn from the Western strategic losses in Iraq and Afghanis-

tan, then they will decline further, and rapidly, in their ability to project strategic power into the mid-21st Century.

*In our next session, we will move away from the immediate issues which I've just raised, most of which merely represent a snapshot of our condition, and move into the broad and distant horizons of where civilisation — and therefore the global strategic framework — is going. This is where our work will lie, in preparing for the **next** generation.*

PART III: A Context for 21st Century Policy

Let me re-cap our discussion thus far with eight basic observations which will help frame the strategic context we need to address in the 21st Century.

Firstly, we will almost unavoidably, in the coming few decades see the global population peak and begin to fall precipitously, with massive economic and social consequences.

Secondly, in the coming years and decades, we will see (and we are already seeing) major changes in the viability and power of *currencies* as well as economies, as well as in the nature of political thinking and voting — and therefore governance — patterns, all of which are now captive to the feeding frenzy which is the urban population concentration. Urban geopolitics and urbanisation are the great addictions of our particular time, and they spell the end of the balanced nation.

Thirdly, we will see that cultures and civilizations, like individual humans, have lifespans of a fairly predictable nature. We are about to see the impact of geriatric characteristics on modern civilization. Will we see life-support or

death for Western civilization? And what parts of modern civilization, if any, will re-emerge strongly and with vibrancy from the ashes?

Fourth, we are witnessing, without fanfare, the end of the efficacy of nuclear weapons and some other strategic power projection systems. Nuclear weapons have already been eclipsed by cyber weapons, just as all weapons are ultimately tamed and eclipsed by others. So stop worrying about nuclear weapons, just as you have stopped worrying about crossbows. The nuclear age has ended, even though it may still have a few explosions left in it. Within this, as Hurricane *Sandy* of 2012 showed the US, and the Honshu, Japan, *tsunami* off Tohoku showed in 2011, our incredibly congested and imbalanced social-political structures (the result of our wealth) mean that cyber warfare is now able to pose a threat of devastation on a far greater and more sophisticated, targeted scale than nuclear warfare. Those two natural disasters created a miniature scale demonstration of the kind of disaster which could be unleashed on urban societies by cyber warfare.

Indeed, the blunt trauma of nuclear warfare is “so 20th Century”. Cyber warfare can create far greater devastation, but with a calculation which makes nuclear weapons meaningless and inefficient. In any event, nuclear weapons are essentially — like so many strategic weapons — only viable as means of intimidation if they are never used. In any event, all weapons are eventually overwhelmed not by treaties and bans, but are superseded by newer countermeasures and technologies.

Fifth, the Westphalian nation-state — and with it our classical concept of democracy — has already been distorted and destroyed by urban city-state

power. But, as with Hellenist times and medieval Italy, the city-state itself is vulnerable and will be wiped away by the exercises of sheer power, and we will again begin rebuilding states and empires on a more balanced scale, similar to the Westphalian state.

Sixth, inevitably within all this, NATO no longer really exists as a meaningful entity, and the US and the European powers are no longer looking at the North Atlantic. The Atlantic is now empty, and new global *blocs* are beginning to form, particularly the first among these: the Eurasian heartland *bloc*. The United Nations itself, as with its ancient counterpart, the amphictiony of Delphi, has ceased to be meaningful even as today's vestal virgins wail a threnody for global governance.

Seventh, as we look at what we now call "democracy", we have seen the past few decades transform most Western societies to the point where urbanization has tipped another balance. That is that we are now *subject to our governments*, when what we had sought, demanded, and created in the preceding couple of centuries was the concept of government being *subject to the people*. But, then, most people — and particularly most urbanized people — eventually, because of their relative wealth and stability, come to prefer the certainty of oppression to the uncertainty of freedom.

Eighth, and final — and perhaps one of the most important — of these scattered points: we are now, in our urban societies, absolutely, totally, minute-by-minute dependent for our survival on the unbroken delivery of electrical power. This is the enormous vulnerability we face. It is matched by our equal vulnerability to the availability of potable water, both from a qualitative

standpoint as well as from infrastructural challenges, as well as in terms of volume.

Many of the studies by my institute, the International Strategic Studies Association, and my recent book, *UnCivilization*, outline the reality that even by the early 21st Century, populations in the highly-urbanised societies of Europe, North America, Japan, and Australasia began to decline in their reproduction rates. The impression of national population growth is being artificially sustained and distorted for a period only by immigration. In all of this, too, has been the continuing phenomenon of rural migration to the cities: urbanisation. This not only has bloated the cities, it has changed demographic as well as reproduction patterns, and, just as importantly — or more so — it has *changed mentalities*, or psychologies. As well, urbanisation has delivered very real changes to the physical dependencies of societies. Little wonder that politicians dare not contemplate reductions in government distributions of the largesse upon which urban societies have come to depend. Riots occur routinely over reductions in subsidies for bread, petrol, and other items. Urbanisation is the great breeding ground of revolution, and we will see that again in the near future, either in the West or in China, India, Turkey, Egypt, or elsewhere.

We have seen the rise of the phenomenon I've labeled "urban geopolitics". Our whole framework as societies has always been built around "identity security", and urbanisation has changed our self-perception, and therefore our identity and goals, not to mention our values and triggers.

That there are challenges and change ahead for humanity — and for all species — is not in doubt. Such is the pattern of nature, and of evolution. Populations rise and fall, *and move*. Patterns of weather fluctuate incessantly. But the *key* elements of change which *we* are facing — and which we must take into

account in our search for security — include the unprecedented urbanization of human societies, and the changes which this brings in thought and dependency patterns; and the reality that human population numbers are about to go into a period of substantial decline. These two factors, particularly coming at a time of change in the global strategic architecture, will affect *everything*, from the worth of currency and property to the ability to grow and distribute foodstuffs, and whether or not we will see security and progress — and even improved or declining lifespans — in human societies.

We cannot forestall or deny great change, but we can understand it and benefit from it. We have already found that massive population growth over the past century did not mean that the earth “ran out of food”, or energy, or space, or wealth. Humanity, indeed, grew more wealthy on a *per capita* basis; food supplies grew to meet the rising numbers; energy supplies were suddenly found; resources abounded.

Writers such as Karl Marx had postulated that capitalism and industrialization set the stage for the transformation of societies — their capture and taming — into “communist” societies which would then be the ultimate example of civilization. What, instead, we have seen is that the urbanization of societies into great cities — indeed a phenomenon which was enabled most successfully by the free movement of capital — has also led to a transformation of *how* we think and act, collectively. This new urban thinking — which has created “urban geopolitics” — has led us to a period of what has become *massive systemic over-control*. This is almost an inevitable outcome of urbanisation.

In other words, urbanisation has led us to a point at which the natural balances of a mixed urban/rural/maritime society have been replaced, with many benefits as well as many unknowns, by city-dominated thinking. The natural balances — market forces, they have often been called — are gradual-

ly replaced by regulatory processes which remove the individual from the equation. This is how organic urban social growth is channeled as it becomes more complex and abstract. The resultant “massive systemic over-control”, then, is a reaction which we have seen before in urban-dominated societies. It is not, in fact, just a phenomenon of the early 21st Century. These modern-era attempts at social containment are merely reflections of the autocracies and tyrannies of the ancient world. We have seen them in the utopianist, essentially similar and centralized dictatorships of communism, socialism, and national-socialism. *These have all been urban-driven processes* in which centralised control is deemed better than the balance of market forces.

And they all appear just before a society collapses or transforms.

Having said that, societies come and go, mostly with as little fanfare as the passing of individuals, their memory sustained only by the grandeur of their deeds or by the physical structures built during their lifetime. Mostly, however, societies — as opposed to sovereign entities, such as nation-states — transform either with their maturing processes, or through collapse or conquest. Some, indeed, are transformed by the peoples they conquer, just as individuals are oft transformed by marriage.

For decades of speaking with those who believed that the sun would never set on the (take your pick) British, US, or Soviet empires, I have posed the question: can you name even 10 percent of the European sovereign states which existed 300 years ago? I have yet to meet one person who could do so.

In a world of change, then, that first requirement of grand strategy applies: know yourself and your own goals. If you wish to resist change to your own values, language, and status; if you wish to project your cultural and linguistic

dominance on others; then first you must know what those values are which you cherish, and what you wish to sustain and achieve.

I asked a Greek-Cypriot friend of mine, Professor Marios Evriviades, to help devise some words for *The Art of Victory*; words which would define what will dominate the 21st Century. We came up with *cratocide*: the murder of nations; *cratogenesis*: the birth of nations; and *cratometamorphosis*: the transformation of nations. All these will we see played out over the coming decades.

As we discussed earlier, the Atlanticism which dominated the 20th Century has drifted away, and yet it has not been replaced by “Pacificism”. Rather, it has seen us drift back into our continents. The great heartland, which rises again, centers on the states of the total Eurasia, reaching from China’s Pacific shores, to Continental Europe’s Atlantic and Mediterranean shores, and includes the Northern Tier states of Iran, and so on. The “second heartland” is North America, and, in this, the United States has the option — which has always been close to its philosophy — of isolationism and introspection.

Equally, however, the US and Canada — and particularly Canada — could embrace their maritime nature, and join the network of maritime powers. And in this lies Britain’s chance to regain a place, not just as — by default — an Atlantic power when Continental Europe has turned inward and eastward, but as a global maritime state, part of the new maritime network. Indeed, in many respects, the new maritime network mirrors what Britain built, and which is still reflected in the Commonwealth. It is, in fact, what has come to be known as “the Anglosphere”, and could embrace those states which are being rejected or marginalised by the heartland states. The maritime coalition could include,

at least: Britain, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, India, South Africa, and so on. And perhaps the US.¹⁶

The 21st Century does see us polarising into new global *blocs*. In essence, we are in broad terms seeing the heartland, introspective powers coalescing; and the maritime powers faced with the prospect of re-acquiring their historical relationship. The US has yet to decide where it wishes to go, and in that respect finds its fate in the balance as well.

But for Britain to be part of this, it must firmly grasp and reiterate its national unity, or face the break-up of a small island state into even smaller, petty communities. It failed to stamp out Scottish secessionist momentum with the 2014 referendum; it now faces a Scotland firmly on the path to a different view of itself and this may dictate the United Kingdom's ability to retain sovereignty and independence from the EU. Unless it can take decisive action on defense, industrialisation, and national unity, Britain will become a forgotten kingdom, a Camelot built upon an earlier Camelot, sitting in the clouds of memory.

This, then, is a century of decision. It is the most fluid strategic situation we have seen for perhaps 1,500 years. We can, as I tried to emphasise in *The Art of Victory*, grasp the future and bend it to the shape we require. To quote Omar Khayyám's 73rd quatrain in his *Rubáiyát*:

*Ah, Love! Could thou and I with Fate conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits — and then
Re-mold it nearer to the Heart's Desire!*

¹⁶ See, Copley, Gregory: "Heartlands, Rimlands, and Oceans: a New Age", in *Energy Security 2.0: How Energy is Central to the Changing Global Balance in the New Age of Geography*, by Copley, Andrew Pickford, Yossef Bodansky, and David Archibald. Alexandria, Virginia, 2011: the International Strategic Studies Association.

Or, as Shakespeare said, in Julius Caesar:

*There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea we are now afloat,
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.*

So we need to be aware that change occurs inexorably. It is happening now. It will happen with increasing momentum in this Century. Some of this change we must embrace. Some of it we can manage.

ⁱ Gregory Copley is an Australian, and is the President of the International Strategic Studies Association (ISSA), based in Washington, DC. 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 32 books on strategic and geopolitical issues, history, energy, aviation, and defense; the latest being *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 is presently chairman of 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.

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