

National Populism and the New World Order

Liberal democracy is perhaps the most successful political ideology in history and has led to unprecedented global development, peace and prosperity. While it has suffered numerous external shocks in the past two decades, it has until now stood firm and continued to underwrite the Western global order it gave rise to in the 20th century. However, its natural dissolution appears to be inevitable in the face of major long-term forces that are reshaping the world. Given the progress made by global society along so many fronts and the myriad transnational institutions it has established, there is an opportunity to manage an orderly transition to the next world order, using the levers created by the current one.

However, liberal democracy is now facing an internal threat in the form of national populism that by its very nature is difficult to handle, and one that combined with external factors threatens the very existence of western civilisation as we know it. Over the past three years national populism has grown from a fringe movement, supported by money, media and personalities into a powerful ideology, National Populism. The resulting clash of ideologies between National Populism and liberal democracy is being fought not just between nation states and power blocs but primarily within them, and this clash threatens to weaken the West just as its dominance is being challenged by emerging superpowers that do not share its values. This may be the first world order whose fate will be determined at the ballot box, where citizens in the West have the opportunity to choose which kind of world they wish to live in.

This month's Sign of the Times examines the world's position at a crossroad, where the actions and choices of western industrialised countries will impact the trajectory of the world for potentially decades to come, determining whether the liberal world order can be reformed and rejuvenated or whether the world is facing a less prosperous, more fragmented and darker future.

The Dynamics and Mechanisms of the Rising Clash of Ideologies

The End of the End of History. The fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 and the subsequent demise of the Soviet Union exposed the ideology of communism for what it was nearly a century and half after it was first defined by Karl Marx: the most effective ideology in history for genocide, with the death toll reaching nearly 100m dead in the 20th century. The speed of communism's collapse around the world and the details of 50 years of totalitarian misrule in Central and Eastern Europe thoroughly discredited the ideology as an alternative to the liberal democracy prevailing in the West. Following a century that saw absolute monarchies replaced in turn by democracies, fascism and communism, often within the same country and even decade, liberal democracy at the close of the last century was the last man standing, exultantly proclaimed as the *"end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government"*.

Western style liberal democracy was the apotheosis of governance systems, ethically, politically, and economically, and America ruled supreme as the world's hyperpower. Learning lessons from the collapse of the Soviet model, China concluded that their way forward was adopting America's model and implemented sweeping reforms to create a massive private sector and private wealth from privatisation,

"The triumph of the West, of the Western idea, is evident first of all in the total exhaustion of viable systematic alternatives to Western liberalism." Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of History?', 1989

trade and capitalism. The 1990s were the decade when the IMF and World Bank promoted the neoliberal Washington Consensus across the world, when the US led the world in military action with the support of multinational institutions like the UN and NATO, and when its economy produced nearly a third of the world's total economic output. The correlation between liberal democracy and prosperity was also well understood, and not just by advanced countries: liberal societies tend to be rich and rich societies tend to be liberal, providing further incentives for developing countries around the world to adopt a liberalist agenda.

Stepping on to the world stage during the first half of the 20th century, liberal democracy replaced the older imperialist political and economic models that had prevailed since the Industrial Revolution and ushered in a more inclusive global capitalist model. This model, based on the free movement of goods

people and ideas enabled more value to accumulate outside of imperial power centres, which had (http://greaterpacificcapital.com)

"There is also the so-called liberal idea, which has outlived its purpose. Our western partners have admitted that some elements of the liberal idea, such as multiculturalism, are no longer tenable."

Russian President Vladimir Putin

previously controlled the flow of trade with their dependent colonial bases. Given America's extremely successful, and relative to others, extreme model of economic liberalism, the promulgation of American led values replaced British imperial ones. The success of liberal democracy was fuelled by advances in science and technology which enabled the mass spread of products, medicines, food, formal employment and other benefits. These advances required the spread of education based on reasoning rather than faith and led to unprecedented levels of knowledge creation and innovation in the 20th Century, alongside increasing specialisation and expertise to develop the breakthroughs in medicines, energy, food sciences and everything else needed to sustain what has become the greatest civilisation in history. The success of each of these liberal societies required more and more learned people, essentially knowledge workers, to develop the intellectual property to keep the system working.

The past two decades have shaken optimists' certainty about the 'End of History'. 9/11 and the subsequent 'War on Terror' began a new period of questioning of both America's power and its political

"Whoever claims that liberal democracy is obsolete also claims that freedoms are obsolete, that the rule of law is obsolete and that human rights are obsolete...What I find really obsolete are authoritarianism, personality cults, the rule of oligarchs. Even if sometimes they may seem effective."

Donald Tusk, European Council President

and economic system. A further shock came in 2008 with the Global Financial Crisis, triggered by the collapse of American banks, revealing the risks of the unchecked capitalist financial systems that had become normal in America. This shook the confidence of nations the world over in America's model of capitalism. China's path, in an important policy reversal, began to diverge sharply from America's, whose capitalism was now labelled among analysts and media, somewhat pejoratively, 'Neoliberalism'. China's continued economic success and its apparent ability to grow without the adoption of liberal democracy put into doubt the link between liberal democracy and prosperity, particularly in the developing world. As the world entered the second decade of the 21st century, China's authoritarian system with its own brand of state capitalism, and Russia's return, at least politically, to the world stage, provided two examples of alternative paths to wealth and power that other countries could follow to promote their own development. As a result, both democracy and capitalism suffered globally, with 2018 marking the 13th year of consecutive decline of global freedom, with both global economic and political freedom in the world trending downwards. However, despite these challenges in the developing world and the formation of powerful opponents, liberal democracy had never been successfully challenged in the West itself since the end of the Second World War, until now.

The Emergence of National Populism. The rise of national populism in western countries in the past decade represents a home-grown challenge to liberal democracy, a competing ideology that calls into question many of liberal democracy's core tenants, including those that enabled its success against its former competitors, such as the Soviet Union. The success of national populism has been rapid and comprehensive in a way that would have been impossible to predict even a decade ago. National

(<https://www.greaterpacificcapital.com>) *A shift has been from competing ideological blocs - US-style capitalism vs. Soviet-style communism - to competing ideologies within and across nations; dividing families, communities, nations and international superstructures from the inside, the world over*

populism has spread from what appeared to be, at first, an isolated phenomena, the Brexit referendum in the UK and the 2016 US presidential election, to countries like Italy, Sweden, Austria and Hungary, in which populists have risen to form or join governments, and then on to the EU, where populists have won a sufficient number of parliamentary seats to have a voice in the Union. In the West national populism, dedicated to the abandonment of liberal values, is now the leading ideology of the government of the current superpower, the US, of the last great empire, the UK, and is gaining traction in the European Union, the most significant peace and prosperity project of post-World War nations.

National populism, at its core, is partly a response to the unaddressed imbalances created under liberal democracy. For all the progress and prosperity it has created, liberal democracy alone does not provide solutions to all of society's problems, and how individual countries implement their democracies and capitalist systems matters to the outcomes that they achieve. In many cases liberal democracy has also led to income inequality, social imbalances and increasingly unaffordable welfare systems. Despite none of these inequities leaving citizens in the West anywhere near as impoverished as populations without liberal democracy in the developing world, they have stoked a level of protest and backlash that have created an existential challenge for the West. The key dislocations that have paved the way for national populism include:

- **Distrust of politics.** The belief that the existing system does not represent the interests of 'the people';
- **Destruction of national cultures.** The fear that immigration, multi-culturalism and political correctness are diluting national values;
- **Deprivation of means and opportunities.** A view that the loss of jobs and economic income driven by capitalism and globalisation is leaving formerly core social groups 'behind', and
- **Dealignment between parties and voters.** Loyalty attachments between traditional mainstream parties and voters have been declining (or leading to the growth of radical wings within parties such as the Tea Party movement, the Democratic Socialists of America or the UK's Brexit Party).

National populism is also a reaction to liberalism's focus on the rights and value of individuals, which liberalism's critics feel has loosened social bonds and undermined traditional sources of authority such as family, community and religion. Importantly though, liberalism has also effectively muzzled the voices of the ignorant, prejudiced and isolationists within societies. National populism appeals to a number of these voices - the poor, the uneducated and disadvantaged as well as the fearful, angry and hateful - who feel that their concerns are not being heard by incumbent leaders - and unites these distinct groups with different values under one banner. The result is an ideology that is built around dissatisfaction and fear and is anti-globalist, anti-elite, anti-immigration, nativist and protectionist, subject to the vicissitudes of demagogues and strongmen offering appealing slogans and simple answers to complex issues.

Mechanisms Magnifying National Populism's Rise. Since traditional political and media institutions are clearly not sympathetic to the values of this new ideology, national populism has required new institutions to support and distribute its message. Here, national populism has been able to benefit from the

weakness of mainstream parties and politicians, the pervasiveness of social media, advances in data tech (<http://www.greaterpacificcapital.com>) based democratic system of government that it could utilise to secure power. In addition, established right-wing interests in the circles of media, money and society, the likes of which had sponsored the Tea Party in the US, have been seeking a new agenda to rally around. The three main thrusts whereby national populism has been able to establish itself as mainstream are political, which involves subsuming a party and its mainstream trusted politicians; communication, which involves developing a new media platform, and; the democratic system itself, which provides the use of electoral systems and procedures to secure power.

Hijacking Established Parties by Seconding Mainstream Politicians and their Voters. The pre-requisite for enduring power for any ideology is a political platform and infrastructure to support and carry it. Both Brexiteers and Donald Trump have found established parties to be receptive or at least vulnerable to their advances. Brexiteers found the UK's Conservative party harbouring enough doubts about Britain's role in the EU and Trump found the Republicans unable to articulate an agenda that galvanised working class white people. The challenge was to capture the platform, its occupiers and then the electorate.

National populism's attractiveness comes partly from its ability to reduce complex issues to simple prescriptions: "Leave the EU and regain sovereignty", "Build a wall and stop illegal immigration" and the like. This need for simple answers was met by two sorts of leaders: ideologues, who create movements and generate initial momentum, and more cynical established politicians who see populism as a path to continued power and their wagon to it, recognising that demographics and economic realities are chipping away at their traditional pillars of electoral support. And with a sufficient number of trusted mainstream politicians paying what appears to be lip service to, or maintaining silence over, national populism's least socially acceptable aspects (such as xenophobia, racism and nativism), many voters not fundamentally aligned with populism are willing to lend their support, based on politicians' continuing support of traditional issues such as social conservatism and lower taxes. These politicians and their traditional core voters therefore effectively embrace the project of populism without apparent regard for where it will inevitably lead, socially, politically and economically, given that it fundamentally rejects the interdependency of liberalism and prosperity.

Mainstream parties and politicians are willing to accept the overlap between their agenda and the new national populist agenda. While national populism is still capitalist, it is opposed or indifferent to many ideas that have ensured capitalism's worldwide success: open borders and free trade, values such as social tolerance, individual rights, democracy and the rule of law. As such it offers a distinctly different model for societies in terms of politics, economics, population diversity, legal systems and the relationships between nations, and leads to very different economic outcomes, too.

Creating a New Media Infrastructure, 'Fake News' and the War on Truth. Social media plays an important role in the propagation of national populism. What began with Facebook as the exchange of opinions on the looks of classmates grew into a platform for the exchange of opinions and information on everything. However, in the absence of fact-checking or scientific rigour, the quality and sources of information

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circulating on social media are often highly questionable. Social media also pushes this questionable

information to individuals who cannot be expected to judge its veracity based on education or training as well as (http://www.greaterpacificcapital.com) prejudiced and the enraged. This distortion of the truth is exacerbated by 'echo chambers' that amplify factually debunked radical and fringe beliefs (such as the QAnon deep-state conspiracy theory, or that the EU does not allow member nations to control its borders), to the point where they appear to be mainstream. These stories and views, having reached sufficient scale on the fringes of discourse, are then picked up by and further amplified as newsworthy by more mainstream right-wing and conservative media, adding further credibility. Right-wing media are also able to generate opinions and make it "news" through their own platforms and then push it to the growing mass of social media news and independent voices that become their distribution channels. Further, the rise of data analytics and AI systems enable the messages of national populism to be distributed on an industrial scale far out of proportion to its actual level of popular support. What has previously been the tools of propaganda used in war has become the tools to use on civilians in peacetime.

The coup against the truth and traditional media's role as the fourth estate has been extraordinarily successful so that populists, supported by a mass of right-wing media, are now able to successfully label the mainstream media as "fake news".

Utilising the Rules and Machinery of Electoral Democracy to Legitimise the Cause. It turns out that democracy as a system of government is perfectly suited to be hijacked if one understands how it works. The key seems to be that democracy works through rules and procedures that lend themselves to manipulation and interference, including gerrymandering, disproportional representation systems (like electoral colleges), vote suppression and single-issue popular referendums. Each of these has a rationale

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for existing in democracy but each can be manipulated for gain. An important factor in how these pre-existing mechanisms could be utilised for big societal change was to be social media. While social media is 'liberal' (open and democratising at face value), it is a potentially destructive force for liberal societies. Democracies, with their fundamental belief in the value of the individual and the free flow of ideas and

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information, have always been at a disadvantage when dealing with propaganda and misinformation as the very nature of a democracy is to allow these threats to have a voice. While these voices have historically struggled to be heard in strong civil societies, thanks to social media and pervasive communications technology they now have a voice and one that can be magnified. Democracy arguably legitimises any person and any cause that wins elections, and how they won becomes secondary or irrelevant. Democracy gives the perfect platform for these voices to become powerful. In effect, national populism is the natural destructive force for democracy. Its national leaders incite its decentralised (through social media) populist supporters to question and undermine expertise and authority on important questions that require both, thereby undermining the very basis of knowledge that powered democracies to become successful. National populism presents a unique conundrum for democracies: should they be allowed to destroy themselves through democratic means? At a minimum, national

populism leads to the “tyranny of the majority”, where the truth of any issue or event becomes secondary to the will of the majority. A peril of democratic values is that even reasonable voices come to accept, against their better judgement, that since the people voted for the national populist agenda it must be allowed to prevail. Truth loses to democracy, as if winning the vote for a flat earth would make it flat in fact. In a post-truth world, politicians would accuse dissenters to the flat earth vote of being anti-democratic and would seek to introduce policies based on the belief that the world really is flat.

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Global Implications of National Populism. Importantly, the ideological problem posed by National Populism is distinctly Western, and so while the West is consumed in an internal struggle over competing ideologies, other countries may find the opportunity to help it fall and/or to rise and take global power. Asia is rising and is set to grow to over half the world's population, middle class, and economic output within the next decade, largely propelled by two major powers: China and, to a lesser degree, India.

The measure of policy effectiveness for any superpower, indeed for any civilisation in history, has been determined by how it responds to the rise of potential rivals. In this regard two things seem clear: The first is that America has recognised the rise of China as a threat and the line of presidents from George W.

“No matter how the international situation changes, we must maintain our strategic steadiness, strategic confidence and patience ... taking in China's own hand the strategic initiative to safeguard national security.”

Bush onward has labelled China as a strategic rival, as a country to keep in check with a ‘pivot’ to Asia, and as one to censure and tax through trade penalties, with full containment likely to come next. The second is that the US is currently abandoning leadership and reform of the world order in pursuit of a policy that is a perfect example of national populism, ‘America First’. Under this policy, many of the most vigorous initiatives to date have been inward looking ‘transactions’ (leaving the Paris Climate Accord, the executive order known as the ‘Muslims Ban’) designed to accrue a short term benefit domestically, while at the same time abandoning the balance of a power in key parts of the world such as the Middle East by taking sides, casting traditional allies as adversaries when it comes to trade or economic affairs, and actively promoting national populism among allied nations with the aim of disintegrating blocs such as the EU, which are seen as rivals.

Hence, the early part of the 21st century begins with a conflict between two opposing ideologies in liberal democracy and National Populism. This conflict is more powerful than previous ideological conflicts in that they are not initially competitions between blocs of countries but are between constituencies within each state and are effective at dividing individuals within each unit, family, friends, workplaces, all the way to national institutions such as parliaments. In this conflict, the liberal democratic world order is under threat of being disintegrated from the inside. The values and institutions that have shaped the current order have failed to sufficiently address current pressing issues and allowed its own rival to grow from within. They are likely incapable of addressing the issues facing the world tomorrow. If this order and its institutions are not successfully reformed, and quickly, it may well be replaced in the coming years by something angrier. Whether and how this happens will depend on the outcome of the clash between these two competing ideologies.

The Clash of Ideologies in the Context of Long-term Cycles and Trajectories

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Stepping back, the current divisions between and within societies across the globe are taking place in the ebb and flow of much larger currents impacting the long-term trajectory of world events. These long-term cycles and mega-trends shaping the arc of history provide the backdrop against which the fight between liberal democracy and national populism will ultimately play out and within which the new world order will be embedded. Five of these stand out as key to shaping humankind for now:

I. The Rise and Fall of Empires. Throughout history, the rise and fall of dominant powers have followed a repeating pattern of rapid expansion, a period of 'stability' marked by increasing overstretch, and finally decline, usually in the face of a new and rising power. By most measures, the 20th century has been the American Century, which has ended with the US as the sole hyperpower following the demise of the Soviet Union. While the 21st century may have started as an American one, history suggests that it will not end as one and the evidence is currently pointing to the inexorable rise of Asia to replace it. While many factors influence the shape of the rise of and fall of empires, an extrapolation of historical precedents suggests that America will continue to be a superpower, and potentially the superpower at least until the middle of the 21st century, with some important challenges from the second quarter of the century onwards.

II. Strategic Resource Superiority in the Transition of Superpowers. Great powers depend on their ability to exploit strategic resources, typically in the form of energy and materials, and resource superiority is critical to the rise of any new power. The successful exploitation of a new resource allows rising nations to challenge established powers while incumbents struggle to transition away from older resource bases that underpinned their rise, e.g. America's exploitation of oil superseded the British Empire's use of steam. Superpowers themselves decline when their resource needs exceed their supply, when they lose access to their reserves, or when their resources are superseded by superior alternatives. Today, developing any viable resource alternatives is likely to require significant technological innovation, and these alternatives have expanded beyond energy and materials to include information technology, for example such as A.I. and most recently exploration of space. While the US has traditionally led the world in investments in innovation, China's ongoing push in A.I. technology indicates that it has recognised its potential as a strategic resource underpinning the potential rise of a new power to rival America.

III. The Gap Years. As the world moves from a population of c.6.1 billion in 2000 to nearly 10 billion by 2050, the growth model of the current world order is clearly not sustainable without profound changes. If the entire world were to live to the standard of the average American, it would need quadruple the current global natural resource base for them to do so, implying a significant impending gap in resources as expectations grow. Growing demand for nearly everything will soon lead to shortages which can only be solved by technological breakthroughs that allow us to produce more while using less. These fundamental breakthroughs will need to occur across a wide range of areas including energy, material sciences, manufacturing, healthcare, defence and information technology. The risk that there is a gap before these breakthroughs are realised gives rise to the idea of the 'Gap Years', which will define the period between the limits of this era's technical capabilities and the breakthrough or reset at the beginning of the next era. During this gap, mankind will learn whether our species has progressed to a level where sharing prevails over conflict or whether the fear of scarcity drives to acquisition for oneself at the expense of others.

IV. Waves in Transition of Civilisations, The Shift to the Information Era. Overlaying the transitions above (http://www.greaterpacificcapital.com) is a **GREATER PACIFIC** the industrial to the information age, playing out in various stages across the world today. Just like industrial societies, starting in Europe with the Industrial Revolution, replaced settled agricultural societies in a civilizational wave during the 19th century, post-industrial and knowledge-based societies today are replacing industrial ones in a new 'third wave'. In each previous transition, reaching back to hunter gatherers resisting agriculturalists in the Neolithic Revolution, the old order despite efforts to the contrary, was unable to stand up to the superior technology, organisation and culture of the new societies. Importantly, the creation and open sharing of knowledge that has characterised the current liberal world order has driven civilizational progress and the transition of the world to the information age, propagating a global 'open society' that values political freedom, transparency and human rights. Within this framework, the rise of national populism appears to be an attempt, ultimately futile, of the older industrial and factional order to reassert itself in the face of the inevitable change brought about by the next wave of post-industrial societies.

V. Potential Flow of Humanity into One Culture. Finally, it is worth considering the direction in which the 'stream of humankind' is flowing. Having migrated out of Africa 200,000 years to cover the globe ago, human society has since expanded consistently, aided by increased communications, infrastructure and technology, and forming increasingly large and complex civilisations with a widening definition of "us". In the progression from bands to tribes to chiefdoms to states, empires and civilisations, the logical endpoint would appear to be a borderless and fully globalised world, one that eliminates (or at least marginalises) the divisive impact of ethnic and cultural differences and creates a global community built on shared values. While the long-term drivers and the telos of the flow to universalism remain unclear, history, particularly the 20th Century, however, shows that the flow can stop and even reverse through Today the world is at a fork in the road. Given the long-term cycles at work underlying the movement of the world, the current liberal world order will dissolve anyway. The question is will it be replaced by something better? The current battle of ideologies is also partly a product of the intersection of these major cycles and trends: America's natural decline as a hyperpower, the era of post-plentiful resources, the loss of traditional industrial jobs and the growing diversity of open societies. It is inevitable that given the magnitude of these changes, fear would emerge as a powerful force and with it, exploitation of that fear by leaders. However, the forces are unstoppable, and the question is only how the world chooses to deal with it: together (in an extension of the liberal world order) or separately (in a competition among players).

The Path to a New World Order – Determining What Kind of New Civilisation to Create

The complexity of the many forces at play can be reduced to three critical ones that challenge the peaceful continuation of global development and transition in the immediate term. Firstly, the general rise of national populist and illiberal sentiments in the West, which has quickly established itself as the most destructive and divisive force facing these countries today. It presents the conundrum that the very foundations of democracy – open information and open voice – create the platform for undoing the power underlying modern democracies; the interdependence between liberal freedoms and prosperity resting on a framework based on the advancement of knowledge and truth. Secondly, the hazard of this divisiveness is made critical on an international level by China's rise, the world's most successful illiberal country and one that is overtaking the US economically and increasingly, politically. And thirdly, America's role in the world. Ironically America's own embrace of illiberalism at the highest levels of government, reverses the post-Cold War roles by making it potentially an aspirant to China's model, rather than the

reverse, lending further international credibility to the ideology. America faces the important choice of (http://www.greaterpacificcapital.com) whether it chooses to be in the decade(s) to come or it sees its interests best served by becoming a predator, utilising its strengths to take what it can from others in terms of economics. One can envisage these forces interacting and reinforcing each other to create two very different worlds over the medium term:

An Open Interconnected World Based on A New Liberal Order. Any renewal or reinvention of liberalism to shape a new world order would be based on the worldview that that the most important things on this planet are interconnected and interdependent and so our future opportunities are maximised and challenges addressed if we work together to create plenty and then share. It recognises differences of effort and capability on the one hand and believes in the importance of initiative and risk taking on the other and so the fruits of labour may well differ while protecting the most vulnerable in society. For such a renewed liberal order to be sustainable it will need to be universal, adaptive and inclusive, and it will further need to provide a stable transition path from the current strained system. It will have to have superior propositions to firstly, marginalised groups within developed nations and secondly to developing countries, offering both better deals than they have on the table today. The path to such an order would involve the West adopting a multi-step approach:

Step 1: Stabilising the West. Any reform and renewal of the Western liberal order will need to come from within, that is, from the West itself. As a first step this will require the definitive defeat of national populism across the major countries of the West, which will in turn require developing credible long-term solutions to the problems that is securing populism its support – income inequality, migration, job loss, the loss of credibility of major institutions, and other centrifugal forces pushing political discourse from the centre to the fringes. If national populism is to be defeated, the grievances, both real and perceived, that it purports to address will need to be actually resolved. Given the magnitude of the interrelated issues facing countries in the West, this will likely require a new “New Deal” type social contract implemented across major countries. This New Deal will need to reach a consensus on (and develop workable solutions for)

- Income distribution, and importantly re-distribution, too;
- The delivery of benefits by the state, both in terms of a sustainable quantum and in terms of the delivery mechanism;
- The nature of the work contract between workers and employees and the freedom of enterprise;
- Sustainable levels of immigration and integration;
- Education based on reasoning, allowing the deciphering fact from fiction and the interdependencies between systems;
- Addressing the promulgation of fear and hatred;
- A reform of political systems to increase accountability without impeding efficiency, and
- A shared understanding of what is the remit of democracies and can be changed by democratic processes and what cannot.

While the basis for the political consensus in Western countries necessary to develop such a New Deal (http://www.greaterpacificcapital.com) that without it a renewed liberal order cannot possible. Such a consensus will inevitably require compromise, and while the “progressive” or “socialist” left wing backlash to National Populism may be emotionally satisfying to its supporters, it is further widening the wedge between political opponents and reducing the likelihood of working solutions being found.

Step 2: Embracing Change. A reformed West like the one described above, has the most chance of weathering the disruptions and embracing the changes brought about by the waves of technological innovation accompanying the transition to the information age. It is clear that technological innovation increases productivity, gives birth to new industries and creates massive value for civilisations as a whole. However, it also gives rise to massive disruptions and economic dislocations as well social imbalances. For example, autonomous vehicle technology is projected to add up to US\$800bn to the US technology if fully deployed but will also put 3.5m (predominantly lower middle class) truck, taxi and bus drivers in America out of work. Resolving such issues will require a rethink of the capitalist model that has driven wealth and value creation in the last world order. This is an undertaking which will happen both top down and bottom up and will include:

- A rethink of the very nature of work, enterprise and lifestyles such that the industrial age employment model (centred around the idea of the factory) is replaced by something more fulfilling and more suited to an information age, likely focusing on services and knowledge and based on greater flexibility and connectivity;
- A model of research, development and access that rewards investment in innovation while providing sufficiently open access to information and platforms so its benefits can be broadly shared and used to create new value, and
- A new consensus on how the benefits of increased technological productivity will be split (given that inflation adjusted wages in the US having remained flat during the last doubling of productivity).

A country with an open society that can manage change will also be well positioned not just to innovate the next breakthrough technology in strategic resources (as outlined above) but also to harness the technology effectively for its own and the world's benefit, rather than trying to suppress or contain it out as a threat to existing incumbent technologies.

Step 3: Promoting Global Integration. Only when advanced western democracies have been stabilised internally and are equipped to manage further change, will they be able to devote their energies to initiatives and strategies that promote global integration, including

- Updating and upgrading existing multi-lateral institutions like NATO and the United Nations, reforming and reshaping these to successfully address contemporary challenges;
- Creating entirely new institutions to deal with urgent problems not clearly envisaged during the 20th century and too large to solve for nations working alone, like climate change or cyber risk, and
- Strengthening networks of international alliances based not only on shared interests but on shared values, such as the Quad between the US, Japan, Australia and India for Indo-Pacific naval security, or the TTP for (potentially) global free-trade.

If the West can sufficiently reinvent itself, it can resume its position of leadership across major global (http://www.greaterpacificcapital.com) the rules of engagement for the next era. Moreover, it will have something to offer to the rest of the world that is distinct from the agenda being successfully spread by rising powers such as China, whose formula is attractive and simple: cash and investment for resources and market access, a de-emphasis of rights and values and the export of surveillance and censorship technologies to all takers. The West's current offer of free trade, open communication, the exchange of ideas and the creation of long-term win-win relationships needs to be augmented for it to beat something so simple and transactional.

A World of Islands in A New Illiberal Order. An illiberal world order offers essentially a vision of societies defined in terms of various national, sub-national, ethnic, racial, sexual, or cultural units; a modern form of tribalism. It believes in a world split between "us" and everybody else, "them". It would value the bonds between those defined as "us" at the expense of "them" and believe that sacrifices of opportunity and bearing of challenges are worth enduring to preserve one's tribe. It would believe that one can trade with others for all that one needs including goods, services, security and issues, without needing to form lasting connections or meaningfully engage with counterparties. The world order resulting from this view is the natural endpoint of the National Populist movements of the West and one that the major autocracies of China and Russia have already been moving towards.

The first steps of the West down the path to an illiberal world order has been paved by populist politicians' easy answers that unite the disparate agendas of those actually "left behind" and those simply aggrieved by the status quo. Given that, in itself, populism denigrates truth (and therefore knowledge), it does not inherently create the first-class infrastructure required to solve the complex questions it purports to address. As such, it is unlikely to be sustainable, but for the time being it provides the opportunity for illiberals to promote an agenda which, while narrow in scope is internally coherent. Such an agenda would define a society that is less prosperous but promises to be more distributive of the economics of its endeavours, and more local and more tribal, less open and so less diverse. Its implementation and adoption on a global scale would follow a series of steps:

Step 1: Western Stagnation. A core challenge for the illiberal agenda is to convince the people to accept a number of key assertions that contradict the underlying facts of the global economy and Western societies today, usually by claiming these facts themselves to be false ("fake news"), including

- Large minority populations in every Western nation (between 14% and 28% of the US and EU population are ethnic and linguistic minorities) have no right to be there, regardless of their citizenship are not citizens, implying that they can or should "go back home";
- A declining fertility rate in the West (of 1.8 to 1.6 in the US and EU) is not an issue that requires foreign labour
- Rising and increasingly unaffordable social costs (social welfare spending representing between 15-30% of US and major European countries' GDP) can be solved through a simple solution
- There is no economic dependence on foreigners (who contribute 47% and 70% of the increase in the workforces in the US and Europe in the past ten years) .

To appeal to a majority, populist politicians need to convince voters that these assertions are not only true but also based on these “facts”. And while over the long term, national populism will need to actually deliver on its promises of creating long term jobs in the heartland, alleviating long-term migration pressures, or creating long term economic growth strategies, over the short term actions like trade wars, building a wall with Mexico or withdrawing from the EU may well be sufficient to win elections and undermine the values of liberalism and internationalism. This will however only be possible if the leaders of the liberal world order continue to fail to deliver a compelling agenda of reform and renewal of their own, and thereby hand over the reins of power to their rivals.

Step 2: Resisting Change and Embracing a Small Footprint. Illiberalism will not stop the information era, the shortage of and competition for resources, the rise of new powers and the technological innovations that make the world more interconnected. Here, National Populists in the West are at odds with illiberal states like China which are investing heavily in R&D and understand the need to migrate from the industrial era to the information era, economically if not socially. The inward focus and isolation of Western illiberal leaders leaves them ill-equipped to deal with the inevitable disruptions and change that this innovation brings and also to compete with advanced illiberal polities like China. The inherent challenges for Western National Populism that are therefore critical obstacles to the success of the project include some intractable problems:

- Given National Populism’s purported focus on the protection of jobs, technological innovation that drives productivity will need to be fought with the same vigour as globalisation to keep lower value-added labour-intensive work at home;
- National Populism’s methods of preserving domestic industries, discouraging investment abroad, the use foreign talent and the laying off unproductive local employees, risk creating industries and economies very much like the Soviet Union’s and China’s legacy state owned enterprises, uncompetitive and reliant on government support and funds to function, and
- National Populism, given its backing by a number of incumbent corporate interests, will need to satisfy those and will find it easy to satisfy the local-local ones that predominantly require a shield from foreign competition but will need to allow local-international ones to play by different rules, taking their value and interests abroad in order to remain internationally competitive. This in turn keeps inefficient businesses alive at home while migrating talent to foreign locations, ultimately creating a third world economy.

The cumulative impact of these contradictions will lead to the West ceding its positions of industry leadership to countries with fewer incumbent interests to protect or more ruthless in their quest to technological dominance. This in turn significantly increases the risk that the next generation of superior strategic resources will be developed and controlled by authoritarian countries like China, or possibly Russia, that do not share the West’s modern historic values or strategic interests.

Step 3: Protecting the Home Base in the Face of Global Disaggregation. Looking ahead, on the global stage, the West’s illiberal states, with their ideological inward focus, coupled with failed or strained economic models, will be forced to abandon or undermine existing institutions like NATO, UN, the World Bank, WTO and others, which in the absence of reform will become ineffective as a self-fulfilling prophecy, further weakening Western countries’ ability to lead in addressing major global issues. A thus weakened

West, stripped of a cohesive front, will compete on an increasingly level playing field with existing illiberal nations (http://www.greaterpacificcapital.com/). Russia. Without differentiation and an attractive set of values, international relations will become a race to the bottom in terms of who one deals with, what one offers them, what one receives and what one puts up with in return. With China and Russia being experienced at this game, the West will find itself either outclassed or effectively promoting the same behaviours and values as authoritarian countries. In this scenario, unaddressed issues, missed opportunities and geopolitical competition will create a fragmented, illiberal and largely closed world order, whose main stability will come from the isolation of countries and the hope that conflicts between neighbours will remain regional. Indeed, national populism by its very nature promotes this fragmentation as "Nation First" visions entail self-interested action and predation of the weak in a manner that precludes meaningful cooperation between countries.

Of course, neither scenario implies that the world will be homogenous across every country. America, and the West in general, will be more liberal than those that have never enjoyed the benefits of democracy, under either scenario. The Communist Party, on the other hand, has stubbornly held on to power in China through the end of the Cold War, the implementation of capitalism and China's growth into a modern middle-income nation, making democracy there an unlikely prospect even in a renewed liberal world order, at least over the short to medium term. And China's authoritarian state capitalist system, with a lack of

China's system, with a lack of checks and balances, suppression of civil society and unresolved issues such as corruption, environmental pollution and rampant income inequality provides a pretty good template of where many of the world's illiberal nations might

checks and balances, suppression of civil society and unresolved issues such as corruption, environmental pollution and widening income inequality provides a pretty good template of where many of the world's developing and emerging market economies might head in an illiberal world order scenario. It also provides a model for where National Populists in more advanced western countries (including ones like Victor Orban in Hungary or Recep Erdogan in Turkey) if left unchecked, may seek to take their nations. Regardless of any variations one would observe between nations, there is a stark difference between a liberal world order and a National Populist one. The former has a track record of delivering peace, prosperity and freedom, under American and allied leadership. The latter in the end has a track record of delivering very little other than mass democide in the form of imperialism, totalitarianism or communism. The current conflict of ideologies suggests that the world will become more illiberal given the battle being fought in every Western nation.

Conclusion: The Fight is for a Civilisation Based on the Pursuit of Peace, Prosperity and Freedom

Ideology provides the underpinning for civilisation. From it springs the model for what is valued by society, how things work, the rules of engagement and the institutions that enforce them. The winner of today's battle of ideologies will determine what the next civilisation will look like, or it will try to. The West is clearly struggling to work through its clash of ideologies. As demonstrated by the Trump Administration's conflict with both Democrat-led states and a Democrat-led Congress and the UK's Brexit divide across cities and parliament, leading nations can be paralysed for years and embroiled in fear and hate that does little to resolve fundamental issues such as healthcare, crime, education, poverty and economic regeneration. During this internal battle of the past few years (and it really has only been a few years!), the

West also struggled to formulate a cohesive foreign policy in response to Russian interference in Western elections (https://www.greaterpacificcapital.com/), Iran's nuclear deal, Israel and Jerusalem, Saudi Arabia, China and Huawei, the Paris Climate Accord and much more.

Whereas, the Cold War was an ideological conflict between blocs, the fight between National Populism and the liberal world order is an ideological conflict within the West, and in each nation at the granular level of individual relationships. But there is little reason to believe that the West will be left alone to work through this clash of ideologies. The international opponents of an open society have the will and the weapons to tip the scales by taking sides. Indeed, the intelligence services of the West, from the US, UK, France and Germany, report an unprecedented level of attacks on the elections in their countries. And while neither Russia nor China is likely driven by an ideological bent to propagate global illiberalism, the spread of National Populism in the West clearly works to their advantage.

In a future where illiberal countries are prevalent in the West, each favouring individual action over bloc action in the form of the EU or NATO, even beginning from the might of America, their clout will be significantly reduced in relative terms, no longer setting the rules of engagement on matters of geopolitics, geo-economics and finance, global trade and international military and security matters. Given that China and Russia are highly effective at their global game and expanding their positions well, even with the benefit of sufficient time, few Western countries under "nation first" National Populist illiberal regimes can expect to be anything other than rule takers and will most likely become hosts to the goods, services, trade, peoples and security regimes that are imposed upon them. Those few that rise to compete effectively with China's and Russia will likely find themselves looking very much like their adversaries in the end. America may be the only nation competent to compete effectively in this manner and so at most risk.

The nature of National Populism all but ensures not only the global scale of conflict, but its continued escalation as well. National Populism at its core is based on outdated models of power that do not reflect the lessons of the last century's history of war. The imperial world order had land as its unit of measure. This was based on wealth coming from land, which either provided direct resources or produced goods that could be taxed. As a finite resource, landholdings could be increased only in a zero-sum exchange between winners and losers, and the most successful countries were those that conquered others to grow their powerbases. This was the driving model of imperialism, land conquest enabled (some) nations to grow.

The key factor in the evolution away from this essentially static and predatory model for the world was trade. Trade, particularly free trade, based on supply and demand and comparative advantages creates growth by co-opting rather than conquering others, and creating an ever-widening group of countries that

The confluence of National Populism's rise in the West, and the rapid rise of China (which is the world's leading illiberal nation and is also on the verge of political superpower status) challenges not only the liberal world order but Western Civilisation itself, putting the peace and prosperity both have enabled at risk

participate and benefit from it. America grew into a superpower by leveraging its superior capitalist assets to effectively out-trade competitors and create superior value. As part of this growth, it established rules and institutions that ensured that trade was largely fair and delivered win-win outcomes by and large.

Moreover, these rules and institutions were powerful enough to bind even countries like China that did not adopt **GREATER PACIFIC** models, limiting their ability to impose themselves on weaker countries but allowing them to create value from trade in return. In this manner, these rules and institutions have underpinned the current liberal world order and trade has been a key source of its success in delivering global development, peace and prosperity. It has enabled the world to grow.

National Populism focuses primarily on the interests of the lands of the nation state (which is its measure of unit). It has this in common with the imperial model. However, in current times, it clearly cannot grow through conquest of land and so in common with the Western liberal world order, it too relies on trade for growth. In contrast though, given its unit is the nation, it is by design focused on “Nation First”. So, if National Populism were to prevail and become universal, that is in a world where every nation is competing only for itself, the natural outcome would be to establish a hierarchy of predation, in which the only rule is that the strong feed off the weak and the weak feed off the weaker, without the system as a whole growing. The only way to change one’s position in the hierarchy and to grow is through conflict. National Populism therefore, while it can become both global and pervasive, can never be universal or sustainable, a “Big Idea” that increases global peace, freedom and prosperity. Its natural end point is a Predatory World Order. The world has seen this mode of thinking and acting before: it underpinned the series of predatory competition for primacy that resulted in the Second World War.

Further, its recent adoption by the United States government increases the risk of real conflict between China and the US for global primacy, (as well as the risk of other regional struggles around the world), with both countries seeking to place their “Nation First” on similar ideological underpinnings. The confluence of National Populism’s rise in the West, and the rapid rise of China, the world’s leading illiberal nation and on the verge of political superpower status, therefore challenges not only the liberal world order but Western Civilisation itself, putting the peace and prosperity both have enabled at risk.

This realisation raises the fundamental question of what it will take to protect Western Civilisation. And what does it take to buy the time to migrate it to a global civilisation fit for the world being reshaped by historic forces? The answer requires the proponents of open societies to reopen the minds of the people, exposing the faulty reasoning that has signed them up for or led them to make peace with National

Having spent generations speaking truth to power, in order to defeat populism, politicians will need to now speak truth to the people

Populism, which are inadvertently betraying their nations and their way of life. This will require a process of dialogue and alignment that bridges the divide of perspectives and assumptions between proponents of liberal democracy and populism. Three potential ways in which such a bridge could be built serve to illustrate how difficult this process is likely to be. The first way entails a cataclysmic event, such as a war, a revolution, a new Great Depression or some other catastrophe that fundamentally resets society’s expectations at the shared lowest common denominator from which to rebuild. In the second way, salvation lies in either in the form of a great leader (it would have to be one of nearly messianic proportions) to reach out across the divide with a universally compelling vision or a breakthrough in scientific discoveries that make solving many of the world’s hard problems easy, creating surpluses and riches beyond needs. The third option would be for rationality to prevail in the face of fatal threats and external pressures - such as climate change, bioterrorism, cyber-security, resource shortages - which would compel opponents to unite and formulate shared responses.

The middle ground of the third scenario appears to have been lost; in placing “America First” one foregoes the **GREATER PACIFIC** capital.com) placing America at the top of a new civilisation that places the “World First”. In placing “China First”, the Middle Kingdom also relives its own self-centred history and foregoes placing China at the top of a new civilisation, too. In seeking a Brexit, the UK foregoes being the leader that helped save Europe. In a time of dire ideological conflict, these are decisions that imperil the project of peace, prosperity and freedom that is the inheritance of history and can transform the Western world order into a sustainable global one.

In the final analysis, National Populism is the natural ideological enemy of America and the West, which in seeking to preserve old-fashioned American values is best positioned to destroy those values and way of life. Therefore, the greatest clash ahead is not between ideologies or between liberals and conservatives, or between cultures, it is between future world orders and the civilisations they will give rise to. Having defined courage over generations as speaking truth to power, responsible politicians in the West will now need to fundamentally change direction if their civilisation is to survive, for defeating populism will require speaking truth to the people.

Notes:-

1. Also called Western democracy, or a representative democracy that advocates civil liberties under the rule of law with an emphasis on economic freedom
2. Source: The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression, 1997, Stéphane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Andrzej Paczkowski et. Al. By comparison, colonialism is estimated to have caused half that number of deaths during the same period (source: RJ Rummel)
3. Francis Fukuyama, The National Interest: ‘The End of History?’, 1989
4. a set of economic policy prescriptions considered to constitute the “standard” reform package promoted for crisis-wracked developing countries by the multi-lateral institutions and the US Department of the Treasury.
5. The First Gulf War and the Kosovo War, respectively
6. See the November 2016 Sign of the Times: The Shape of the World to Come – Part I: How the World is Progressing (<https://www.greaterpacificcapital.com/article-inside/the-shape-of-the-world-to-come-part-i-how-the-world-is-progressing>)
7. As measured by virtually any historically relevant indicator including economic output, population, human development indicators, technological output or geographic extent
8. First referenced September 16, 2011 by President George W Bush
9. according to Freedom House’s Freedom in the World Index
10. The <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/human-freedom-index-2018.pdf> (<https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/human-freedom-index-2018.pdf>)
11. A far-right conspiracy theory detailing a supposed secret plot by an alleged “deep state” against U.S. President Donald Trump and his supporters.
12. Source: The Financial Times (<https://www.ft.com/content/7ed1572c-2aa4-11e8-a34a-7e7563b0b0f4?emailId=5aae5fdc9c211d000483af25&segmentId=ce31c7f5-c2de-09db-abdc-f2fd624da608>)
13. E.g. Twitter has identified over 50,000 automated bot accounts linked to Russia that posted material about the 2016 US election, as reported by the Guardian (<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/jan/19/twitter-admits-far-more-russian-bots-posted-on-election-than-it-had-disclosed>). Further afield, an estimated 13% of Twitter accounts engaging on Australia’s 2019 federal election were bots, as reported by The Sydney Morning Herald (<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/bots-stormed-twitter-in-their-thousands-during-the-federal-election-20190719-p528s0.html>)
14. ...and the self-interest of the electoral majority results in the despotic-like oppression of minorities, a position first formulated by John Stuart Mill, “On Liberty” 1859

15. See the July 2019 Sign of the Times: Asia Rising: Quantifying the Asian Century (<https://www.greaterpacificcapital.com/article-inside/asia-rising-quantifying-the-asian-century>)

16. See the August 2018 Sign of the Times: China's Path to World Leadership (<https://www.greaterpacificcapital.com/article-inside/chinas-path-to-world-leadership>)

17. See the June 2012 Sign of the Times: American Power Patterns of Rise and Decline (<https://www.greaterpacificcapital.com/article-inside/american-power-patterns-of-rise-and-decline-published-in-obama-and-the-world-routledge-studies-in-us-foreign-policy>)

18. See Toffler, Alvin: The Third Wave

19. A development predicted by philosopher Karl Popper in "The Open Society and its Enemies", 1945

20. Source: The Heritage Foundation

21. Sources: OECD, Nationmaster, https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en, (https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en) US Census data

22. i.e. the murder of any person or people by their government, including genocide, politicide and mass murder

23. Source: The Financial Times (<https://www.ft.com/content/96d598da-abfa-11e6-9cb3-bb8207902122>), The Washington Post (https://www.washingtonpost.com/gdpr-consent/?destination=%2fworld%2fnational-security%2fobama-orders-review-of-russian-hacking-during-presidential-campaign%2f2016%2f12%2f09%2f31d6b300-be2a-11e6-94ac-3d324840106c_story.html%3f), UK Parliament report (https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmcomeds/363/36308.htm#_idTextAnchor033), The Center for Strategic and International Studies (<https://www.csis.org/analysis/successfully-counter-russian-electoral-interference>)

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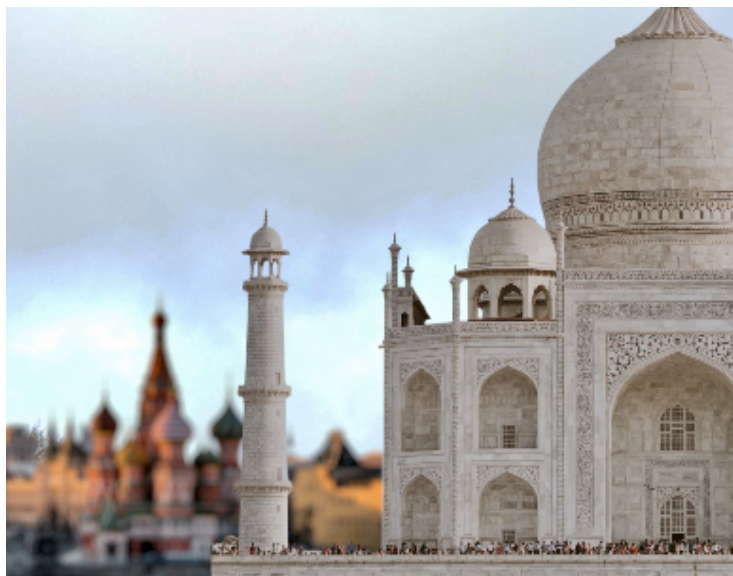
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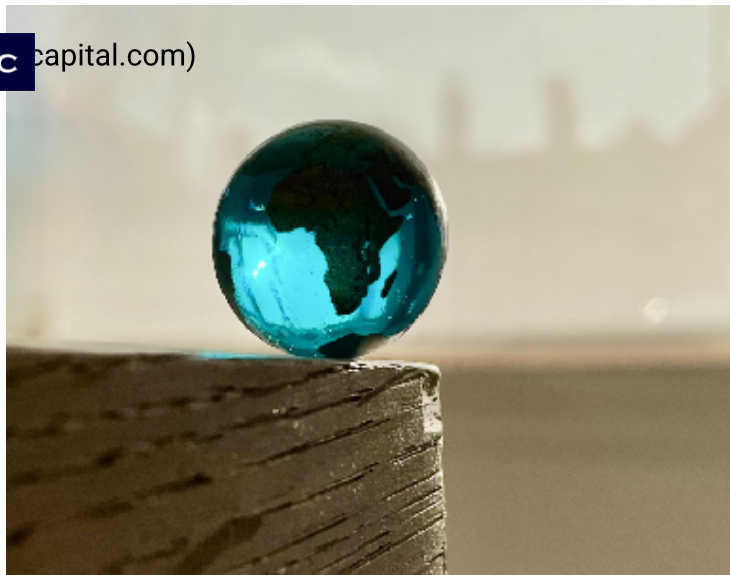


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