

# Civilization & Commitment



# Civilization and Commitment

Martin Beresford ©

We all are born into this world, live here for a while, face many challenges and opportunities, and then die. Yet we live in profound ignorance regarding five fundamental questions:

- What is the nature and origin of the universe in which we live?
- What is the nature and origin of consciousness and will?
- Why are we here?
- Do we survive death in some form?
- Or is this life, and the four dimensional space-time of our everyday consciousness, all we shall ever know – a brief, unexplained flicker in cosmic time and space?

These questions have, of course, occupied men's minds throughout history. The majesty and beauty of the universe inspire us with deep awe and reverence. Together with the suffering and ephemeral quality of human life, they leave us deeply dissatisfied with our ignorance, and with a profound yearning for answers to these fundamental mysteries.

*“It is intolerable to the mind  
That this small human age where we are locked  
Might be all that we shall ever know;  
Or that the great incomprehensible  
Mysteries of life must always lie  
Beyond the frontiers of our consciousness.  
The mind demands to know more than we see,  
Insisting that there must, there **must** be more than this...”*

Without answers to these questions, how can we make sense of our own little lives, and how should we live?

For most of us, our first priority is the physical survival, wellbeing and success of ourselves and our loved ones. But once we have achieved that, we must each define our own higher goals and commitments – among which, I believe, nothing is more important, ultimately, than seeking answers to these fundamental mysteries, as part of our overall quest for wisdom and enlightenment. As Thomas Huxley put it:

- *“The question of all questions for humanity, the problem which lies behind all others and is more interesting than any of them, is the determination of man's place in nature, and his relation to the cosmos”.*

Exploring the mysteries of creation and of consciousness is a task for the empirical sciences, rather than for metaphysics or religious dogma. And, thanks to the empirical sciences, we have gradually progressed from primitive speculation and myth towards increasingly sophisticated attempts to discover answers to these mysteries. Since the Enlightenment, in particular, the empirical sciences in the West, increasingly free from the repressive influences of organized religion, have made spectacular progress – often

despite fierce opposition from religious hierarchies claiming divine authority for their myths and dogma.

**The empirical sciences have achieved spectacular breakthroughs, but we are still fundamentally in the dark regarding the nature and origin of the universe**

Recent advances in physics – especially in relativity and quantum theory – have achieved astonishing breakthroughs in our understanding of the universe, in terms of the very large and the very small respectively. In doing so, they have revolutionized some of the fundamental assumptions of classical physics - which themselves, in their time, represented major breakthroughs.

We know that we and our world are almost infinitely small compared with the known universe – a thing of awesome beauty and almost inconceivable vastness and mystery. And since Einstein, we know that time, space and matter extend far beyond the four-dimensional space-time model of our everyday perception, or of classical Newtonian physics. Since Hubble, we have been reasonably sure that our universe is expanding, apparently at an accelerating rate, and that it started with a Big Bang - whose primal cause, however, remains a profound mystery.

These and other brilliant advances have challenged some of the fundamental assumptions of classical physics regarding the nature of physical reality, the relationship between observed phenomena and the observer, and even our basic concepts of causality, space, time and matter.

We know, for instance, that light appears to have the properties both of waves and of particles. And at the subatomic level there is evidence that the fundamental particles of matter are almost inconceivably small; quantum theory suggests they are subject to a fundamental uncertainty regarding their momentum or position – an apparent manifestation of the “observer effect”; and they appear to consist of vibrating energy waves rather than matter as we normally perceive it – an idea strikingly reminiscent of the concept, described in the Upanishad, of a cosmic vibration underlying all existence.

Perhaps even more intriguingly, quantum theory, supported by a large body of empirical evidence, suggests that some mysterious force connects otherwise isolated objects independently of time and space. Schrodinger, one of the fathers of quantum theory, was able to demonstrate such connections (“verschränkung” or entanglement) between separated particles that persist regardless of distance – a prediction of quantum theory that Einstein called “spooky interaction at a distance”. Even our minds seem to be involved in such “entanglement” – see below.

The implications of these and other discoveries take us far beyond our everyday, commonsense model of the world around us, severely stretching the conceptual ability of our four-dimensional space-time awareness. And while some of the implications of relativity and quantum theory appear, at this stage, to conflict with each other, some scientists believe we may be getting close to reconciling them in a unified “theory of everything”.

But despite these advances we are still basically in the dark regarding the ultimate nature and origin – let alone the purpose - of the universe in which we find ourselves.

## **The empirical sciences have also achieved major breakthroughs in our understanding of consciousness**

We know that our brains are highly complex electro-chemical systems that have evolved, as part of our bodies, from primitive organisms in response to the challenges of surviving, winning and reproducing in a ruthlessly competitive environment. We know – or believe - that Homo Sapiens is currently the most advanced life form on this earth, and that other, possibly more advanced life forms may well exist – or have existed - elsewhere in the universe. It seems likely that we ourselves will continue evolving in future – hopefully into progressively more advanced life forms.

Moreover, given the exponential rate of acceleration in our technological progress – especially in the information sciences – it seems likely that artificial intelligence will soon equal and then surpass human intelligence. With the combination of human and artificial intelligence our combined intelligence could become increasingly non-biological, and vastly more powerful in terms of capacity, speed and knowledge-sharing ability than our biological brains alone. The potential implications of such a development are profound.

But what is consciousness, and what is the primary function of the brain? Is it the sole generator of consciousness, or does it have some other function? Can consciousness occur in some ways independently of the physical brain? How does our conscious will affect the movement of physical objects – starting with the physical actions we make? How “absolute” are the dimensions of time, space and individuality in which our everyday conscious suggests we are locked? How absolute is our apparently fundamental individuality? Conversely, are our minds somehow linked to others, and to the cosmos itself, in some mysterious “cosmic unity”, as suggested by mystical and religious tradition and, increasingly, empirical evidence?

## **Love, transcendence and unity are attractive ideals, and seem to hint at greater things that are normally hidden from us**

The desire to transcend individuality, space and time, together with accounts of such mystical experiences, have been persistent themes of religious and mystical tradition throughout history. Most of us sometimes experience brief but extraordinary moments of apparent enlightenment, insight, detachment, selflessness, and wonder; an ecstatic feeling of love and unity with other minds and with the cosmos - a sense that in some mysterious way we may be connected with a fundamental unity far beyond the everyday limits of space, time and individuality. The power of music, especially, sometimes seems almost unbearably beautiful:

*“Brief moments of perfection – diamond glints  
Sparkling on freshly fallen snow,  
The wondrous beauty of your eyes, the glow  
Of sunset; moonlight on a tranquil sea,  
Or when Spring’s perfectly formed blossoms bloom  
Ecstatic pink against the April sky,  
Their beauty hints at immortality.  
A single chord of music sometimes brings  
Insights that often lie too deep for words -  
Glimpses of one-ness with infinity,  
Love, and the underlying unity of things”*

Of course, such experiences in themselves do not necessarily prove anything. Still, despite much skepticism, a mass of empirical evidence on extra-sensory perception and other psychic phenomena demonstrates, beyond any reasonable doubt, that our minds are indeed in some respects capable of transcending the limitations of time, space and individuality.

**Moreover, psychic experience, quantum theory and evidence of “entanglement” support the idea that transcendence is possible**

Personal psychic experience and anecdotal evidence, now robustly supported by laboratory evidence, suggest that the fundamental “entanglement” implied by quantum theory may also apply to our brains and minds, as well as to physical objects. We may speculate that our individual minds may be somehow fundamentally “entangled” with each other and with the cosmic unity hinted at by physics - and by religious and mystical tradition - at a level of reality deeper than our everyday perception can grasp.

These ideas, like those of modern physics, may seem highly counter-intuitive, since they conflict with our everyday perception of time, space and individuality as absolutes. However, they appear to be broadly consistent with the implications of modern physics. Moreover, in light of the extraordinary implications of relativity and quantum theory, it would surely be surprising if our minds and brains alone were the only phenomena about which classical physics, and our everyday four-dimensional model of space, time, matter, individuality and causality, were wholly correct.

The occurrence of psychic phenomena such as telepathy, clairvoyance, telekinesis and precognition has been conclusively demonstrated in laboratory conditions – complementing and supporting a wealth of personal experience and anecdotal evidence of such phenomena throughout history and across all cultures.

Moreover, these phenomena appear broadly consistent with some of the implications of modern physics. Quantum theory, in particular, reinforces the credibility of psychic phenomena that we might otherwise be inclined to reject – despite all the evidence - because they don’t sit comfortably with our everyday, commonsense model of reality.

**But we are still in the dark regarding the fundamental nature of consciousness**

But this still leaves us with the basic question: Is consciousness exclusively a product of the electro-chemical functioning of our physical brains, and is it inextricably confined to the familiar, four-dimensional space-time of our everyday experience – as common sense might suggest? Or could its function be, on the contrary, to actually narrow the scope and depth of our potential awareness? How is it, for example, that in some cases when parts of the brain’s activity are reduced – through drugs, meditation, chanting, prayer, hypnosis, exhaustion, fasting, oxygen shortage, sickness or even near-death – our perception appears to expand, becoming more transcendental, brilliant, insightful and apparently free of time and space?

One intriguing hypothesis, advanced by philosopher C.D. Broad among others, is that the function of the brain may be largely “eliminative and not productive”. Broad argued that the brain may have evolved as a kind of filter or “reducing valve” that protects our consciousness from being overwhelmed by excessive sensory inputs. It does so by

filtering out the bulk of our potential awareness, thus enabling us to focus on those inputs that are essential for day-to-day survival – “the tiger behind the tree” - at the cost of losing the broader range of perceptions that, however beautiful or profound, are not needed for our routine survival and effectiveness.

Aldous Huxley, an early and thoughtful experimenter with mescaline, observed that the wondrously expanded perceptions and insights from mescaline are exactly “the sort of effects you could expect to follow the administration of a drug having the power to impair the efficiency of the cerebral reducing valve”. Simply put, in some situations, the more we inhibit normal brain activity, the wider, deeper and more vivid our consciousness becomes. To take an extreme example, well-documented cases of out-of-the-body experiences – including verifiable near-death experiences - provide further evidence of an apparently inverse relation, in at least some circumstances, between the normal functioning of the brain and the scope, intensity and transcendence of our awareness.

### **Is consciousness necessary? Is “free will” really free?**

Since Freud, we have known that “we live on the surface of our being” - that the conscious mind is only a small part of our total mental activity; and that we can explore our subconscious through various means, including drugs, hypnosis, dreams, meditation, music and other consciousness-expanding practices. We know that the bulk of the brain’s activities – regulating the incredibly complex and subtle workings of our electro-chemical biology, and responding smartly and rapidly to external stimuli - occur without our being conscious of them at all.

Even those activities that we are normally conscious of, and feel that we are in control of, sometimes take place more or less unconsciously, when we go on “autopilot”. Tired soldiers may sleep while marching. Sometimes quite complex problems that might otherwise seem to require intense conscious thought, are solved very effectively in our sleep, or unconsciously during our “waking” moments, by our subconscious minds, without our being conscious of the process at all; witness the frequent experience of “sleeping on a problem” and waking up with a fully developed solution in our mind. Some of the greatest music has sprung, apparently without conscious involvement, straight from the unconscious mind of the composer. Sometimes we awake from deep sleep with marvelously creative solutions to previously unsolved problems, or with deep insights that had previously eluded our conscious minds....

Is “consciousness” necessary – or is it just a very interesting and complex by-product of the functioning of our brains? Is an amoeba or a cockroach “conscious” in any meaningful sense, or is it fully on “autopilot”? Is a rattlesnake “conscious”? Or a dog, or a cat? Or a chimpanzee? Where do we draw the line? Which, if any, of the marvelous things that we human beings have achieved and created, could not have been done without our conscious involvement? It certainly feels as if consciousness and free will are real. But could the determinists be right in arguing that free will is an illusion? And at what point in the evolution of life forms, from amoebas to human beings, does “consciousness” (or “free will”) come into being – or become in any sense necessary for our survival, procreation and development? What, ultimately, is the difference between our human consciousness and artificial intelligence?

**Given our fundamental ignorance, there can be nothing more important, ultimately, than the pursuit of knowledge and enlightenment**

Clearly, we have made enormous progress in the search for answers to life's mysteries. And our progress has benefitted from increasing acceptance of the idea that, as Russell put it, *"It is undesirable to believe a proposition when there is no ground whatsoever for supposing it to be true"*, and that A.J. Ayer was right in predicting that *"the widespread acceptance of (Russell's) doctrine would bring immense benefits, diminishing the incomes of clairvoyants, bookmakers, bishops and others who live on irrational hopes..."*

However, despite such progress, we are still completely in the dark regarding the fundamental nature – let alone the purpose - of the universe and of consciousness. Without answers to these questions the human situation is, as Camus argued in "The Myth of Sisyphus", in some sense "absurd". We really have no idea of the answers to reasonable questions like "Why are we here?", "What is the meaning of life?" or "Why is there so much pain and suffering in the world?" Camus concluded that, given this fundamental absurdity of the human situation, "there is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide – judging whether life is or is not worth living".

Like most people, my personal response to Camus' question, while recognizing its legitimacy, is that I choose to live, while recognizing our fundamental ignorance and the fact that we seem to be no more (or less) than a relatively advanced kind of animal. And assuming we choose to live, I believe we should surely do so with courage, love, hope, and commitment. And in doing so, I believe, there can be nothing more important, ultimately, than pursuing enlightenment regarding these fundamental mysteries.

This premise is admittedly a personal value judgment, albeit virtually axiomatic, at least to me:

*"We do not know where we are from, or why,  
Nor do we know what lies beyond the grave;  
But if we do not also choose to die  
We must accept pain and mortality  
And live with courage, love, superior will,  
Commitment, and a passion to excel -  
Seeking, with restless curiosity,  
The awesome mysteries that must surely lie  
Past the dimensions of our little lives,  
Beyond the boundaries of the universe,  
Knowledge that lies beyond our deepest dreams –  
Vistas of wonder and infinity..."*

**The ideal civilization is therefore one that best provides the freedoms required for the pursuit of knowledge and enlightenment, by effectively resolving the inherent conflicts that confront any society**

If we accept the above premise – admittedly a value judgment, with which some may disagree - it follows that the ideal civilization is one that best provides the personal and material freedoms and support that enable us to pursue answers to these fundamental mysteries, as part of our overall quest for fulfillment and enlightenment.

It also follows that the greatest cause to which we can commit ourselves, along with our personal pursuit of enlightenment, is to support the ongoing development, effectiveness,

improvement and, when necessary, the defense of whatever form of civilization best meets these criteria.

But what kind of civilization best meets those criteria?

Historically, civilizations evolved from small hunter-gatherer tribes, to agrarian and urban cultures, to city-states and empires. There were arguably two great watersheds in the history of Civilization:

The first was the **Agricultural Revolution** that started in the Fertile Crescent of the Middle East some ten thousand years ago and took about eight thousand years to spread around the world. It led to the emergence of major civilizations including the Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Chinese, Greek/Roman, Islamic and, most recently, Western European and American civilizations. Within Western civilization, key turning points included the shift from paganism to monotheism and Christianity (initially as an exclusively Jewish sect); the long dominance of the Roman Catholic and Russian/Greek Orthodox churches; the Renaissance, the Reformation; the Westphalian age of nation states; the Enlightenment, and the Age of Reason.

The second major watershed, often described as the **Great Transition**, includes the Industrial Revolution and, arguably, the current Post-Industrial and Information Revolution. It encompasses roughly the last two hundred years and may arguably extend over the next two hundred years or so. Futurists like Ray Kurzweil and Joel Garreau predict exponential acceleration in information and communications technology, genetics, robotics and nanotechnology, culminating in a “Singularity” in which artificial intelligence will far outstrip human intelligence, leading to a new, highly advanced era of civilization.

### **All civilizations need to resolve the same fundamental conflicts**

As civilizations evolved, they developed various ways to reconcile a number of conflicts between inherently competing demands. These include the perennial conflicts between:

- Competing demands for wealth and power
- The rich and powerful few vs. the majority
- Wealth generation vs. wealth redistribution
- The public vs. private interests
- Conformity vs. diversity
- Individual freedoms and rights vs. responsibilities, obligations and the rule of law
- Order and stability vs. change
- Unity of culture and values vs. intellectual and religious freedom
- Defense against external threats vs. the desire for peace and stability
- Intellectual and religious freedom vs. the perceived need for shared values

A civilization may be judged by how successfully it resolves these conflicts.

### **Western civilization in its current form resolves these conflicts more effectively than any other civilization to date, thanks to its unique values**

Judged by the above criteria, Western-style secular market democracy – broadly defined as the group of countries that share commitment to the principles of personal, religious, political and economic freedom, personal responsibility and the rule of law that evolved primarily in Europe and North America - has emerged as clear winner from the battles between conflicting ideologies that characterized the 20<sup>th</sup> and earlier centuries.

We are extraordinarily lucky to have been born in this time and this civilization. Compared with any earlier time or any other civilization, most of us live marvelously free (in the broadest sense of the word) and potentially rich lives – far better than even the richest and most powerful people have enjoyed at any time in the past when, as A.J. Ayer noted,

*“Most people have been far too poor, ill-educated and oppressed to get any sustained enjoyment from life at all”.*

But which values have been truly essential to the relative success, unity and durability of Western-style civilization? And in what way do they reconcile, more effectively than other civilizations have done, the conflicts that face any society?

From its roots in Middle Eastern, Greco-Roman, Judeo-Christian and pagan cultures through the middle ages, Magna Carta, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the English, French and American revolutions and the Industrial and Post-Industrial revolutions, Western civilization (defined as below) has gradually evolved a uniquely effective set of compromises and balances between the conflicting demands listed above.

The precious, hard won freedoms and prosperity that we are so lucky to have inherited were built on shared commitment to a distinctive set of values that have evolved in response to those conflicts. Those values - largely unique to Western civilization – include:

- The rule of law, and equality before the law
- Personal responsibility and trust;
- Clear limits on the role, power, intrusiveness and cost of government;
- Personal liberty, including habeas corpus, religious, political and intellectual freedom and tolerance, freedom of speech and assembly;
- Recognition of “the consent of the governed” as the ultimate basis for the legitimacy of government;
- Separation of church and state; respect for reason vs. superstition and metaphysics;
- Secure property rights and free markets – keys to effective wealth creation;
- Widespread “trust” – between individuals, institutions, government and governed, businesses and customers, lenders and borrowers
- Capitalism, tempered by some degree of wealth redistribution - motivated at least partly by a broad sense of compassion and fairness as well as by the requirements of social stability

**Based on these distinctive values, the achievements of Western civilization have been utterly marvelous**

Since the Enlightenment, the achievements of Western civilization, broadly defined as the family of nations that share a common commitment to the above values, have been utterly marvelous – far beyond those of any other civilization to date. Never before in history have there been such dramatic and widespread improvements in the quality of human life. We are extraordinarily lucky to have been born into this civilization, which has provided unprecedented freedom from the oppression, fears, insecurity, discomfort, disease and poverty that have plagued the bulk of the human race throughout history.

For countless millions, relative freedom from poverty has been one of the greatest of these achievements. As J.K. Galbraith put it,

- *“The greatest restriction on the liberty of the citizen is a complete absence of money”. People cannot be truly free if they are poor.*

Theories of economic development abound, with varying degrees of emphasis on the importance of wealth generation compared with wealth re-distribution, and of the roles of government and the private sector respectively ([Appendix B](#)).

During the second half of the twentieth century, in particular, advances in our understanding of economics further enhanced the wonderful effectiveness of secular, mixed-economy market democracies. Those advances include a substantial re-casting of economic thinking away from dirigisme, state intervention and central planning towards free markets and – at least in principle – towards smaller government; and an associated withdrawal of the state from the “commanding heights” of the economy. Heroes of this sea change in economic thinking included Von Mises, F.A. Hayek, Milton Friedman, Keith Joseph, Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan (see later discussion of the financial crisis of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century).

Within Western civilization, it is clear that “mixed economies” in which the benefits of free market capitalism are mixed with varying degrees of social welfare (motivated by the need for social stability as well as by relatively altruistic goals of fairness) have helped to reduce the grosser inequalities associated with unrestricted capitalism. By doing so, they have provided a relatively high degree of social stability compared with earlier forms of capitalism. Meanwhile, advances in financial theory and our understanding of capital markets further supported high rates of capital formation, capital mobility and capital productivity – key factors, along with the rule of law, property rights and free markets, in facilitating economic growth.

Of course, capitalism is prone to occasional – and sometimes spectacular – booms and busts, as in the current financial crisis (discussed later). However, compared with alternative economic systems, and despite its acknowledged weaknesses it has proved, so far, to be the system that is best able to correct its own excesses.

**The spectacular success of the West, and consequent widespread adoption of Western-style freedoms, has contributed to the spectacular “rise of the rest”**

Mixed-economy capitalism and democracy in their current forms have served us extraordinarily well, building on the earlier achievements of post-Enlightenment liberalization. Following the manifest failure of centrally planned economies in the USSR and elsewhere (including the failed experiment with socialism in the UK) the wonderful strengths of Western-style secular market democracy became apparent to all, both in

the West itself and in other regions, notably Asia. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it seemed likely that societies that shared a commitment to Western-style economic freedoms would realize even more spectacular advances in the post-cold war global information age – a prospect that no doubt partly explained the rapid spread of Western-style secular market democracy in the final decades of the century.

The resulting “rise of the rest” has seen spectacular economic progress in countries all over the world that adopted, to at least some degree, Western-style market-based economic freedoms – perhaps most notably in China and India, following the earlier success of Japan, the Asian tigers and dragons. Russia, also, belatedly followed the example of China by giving precedence to economic rather than political liberalization, and experienced a moderate economic resurgence of its own (supported, at least temporarily, by high oil and gas prices and its position as dominant supplier of oil and gas to West Europe).

### **This has led to hopes of an enlightened post-cold war “new world order”**

In the last decades of the twentieth century, many people assumed that the widespread economic progress resulting from the adoption of Western-style economic freedoms would lead inevitably to greater political liberalization, and thus eventually to democracy in many, if not all countries. It was also assumed that, since democracies are inherently more inclined to international cooperation and the avoidance of war, conflicts between nation states, cultures and ideologies would soon become a thing of the past, as globalization enmeshed us all in a peaceful system of economic and political liberalization.

The new world order was expected to provide a basis for global peace, and cooperative resolution of the major challenges that face the global community.

In Europe, the battle between pacifism and militarism had already been more or less decided, in the two generations since World War II: Europeans have largely rejected the use of military force as a tool of foreign policy, and focused instead on building “civilian states”. Admittedly, Europe’s de facto pacifism was possible only under the American defense umbrella – a fact that Europeans often seem inclined to forget, especially when smugly preaching to Americans. Still, many believed that the EU could lead the world by example into a new age in which traditional national rivalries and the use of force would give way to shared sovereignty, the international rule of law, effective supranational institutions, and the peaceful resolution of all international conflicts.

Optimism ran high – reminiscent of the Wilsonian optimism and idealism that followed World War I and similar optimism after World War II. President George HW Bush spoke in 1990 of the new world order as

- *“A world quite different from the one we’ve known. A world where the rule of law supplants the rule of the jungle. A world in which nations recognize the shared responsibility for freedom and justice. A world where the strong respect the rights of the weak.”*

**However, Western civilization, though very successful compared to others, is far from perfect. It will no doubt continue to evolve and – hopefully – to improve, but like all civilizations it is potentially very fragile.**

The huge success of Western civilization in its current forms doesn't mean it is either perfect or monolithic or homogeneous – it clearly isn't. Nor does it mean that its values can be imposed willy-nilly on other societies that lack the appropriate cultural and institutional infrastructure – they clearly can't. Nor does it mean that we cannot learn much from the wisdom of other cultures – we clearly can.

Nor does it mean that Western values are in some sense absolute or God-given. On the contrary, our values and rules (including altruism and love itself – see Appendix) appear to have evolved, much like those of the animal kingdom, as practical means of maintaining social order, stability, group survival and success in a brutally competitive and ultimately very cruel world. They derive their authority from the consensus of the group – “the consent of the governed”; they are enforced – as in the animal kingdom – by social rewards and punishments; they have evolved in their current forms because they have proved effective; and they will no doubt continue to evolve, as in the past, through a series of pragmatic compromises and adaptations.

But we must remember that civilizations can be very fragile. Even the most advanced and enlightened can quickly revert to chaos and barbarism; and when they do, the worst of human nature - the savage that lies close beneath the skin - can quickly surface, as we have seen, and continue to see, to horrific effect in recent history.

**Moreover any “new world order” must address a formidable array of global challenges**

The precise form that such a new world order might take is still very much open to debate. The rapidly evolving patterns of global power have bred a whole generation of geopolitical gurus with varying – and rapidly changing - theories and predictions, sometimes as ephemeral as haute couture fashions.

Early in the post-cold war era, the prevailing wisdom held that the world would be dominated by competition between democracies (represented by the West) and autocracies (represented by Russia and China). Other theories held that the US would become a permanent global hegemon, or that the new world order would belong to the “soft power” model of postmodern Europe, or would be dominated by the global clash of civilizations between the West and Islam. Later predictions held that democracies and autocracies would come to terms with each other, and the world would be ruled jointly by a G-2 consisting of the USA and China – leaving Europe and Russia as also-rans – or that the world would be dominated by conflict between the US and China.

Whatever the eventual outcome, the obstacles to realizing a peaceful world order, capable of addressing the threats we all face, are clearly formidable. The cost of failing to deal with those threats could be catastrophic for us all. They include:

- Global climate change and related environmental dangers
- Energy, water and other resource shortages
- A large and growing number of failed or dysfunctional states
- The “clash of civilizations”, now freed from cold war constraints
- Radically diverging demographic trends between and within states
- Rising global crime and disrespect for the rule of law

- Conspicuous economic inequality – both between and within states
- Major shifts in the global balance of economic and military power (e.g. the rapid growth of India and the PRC)
- Potential instability in global capital markets
- Religious fundamentalism – especially but not exclusively Islamic
- Proliferation of WMD, and their availability to Islamic or other fanatics
- Potential resurgence of protectionism and mercantilism, and resulting disruption of progress towards free trade and economic globalization

Two challenges in particular threaten to undermine the rosy expectations of the immediate post-cold war period, reflecting the two main historical causes of war – competition for resources and conflicting religions:

- The resumption of traditional great power conflict – which believers in the “end of history” naively considered a thing of the past
- The re-emergence of religious fundamentalism – previously held in check by the constraints of the cold war – and its combination with destructive technologies

**First, history has not ended; we are witnessing the return of traditional great power conflict – an increasing risk in light of global resource shortages**

Realists like Henry Kissinger and Samuel Huntington warned that conventional expectations of the immediate post-cold war period were over-optimistic. Skeptics argued that the supposed “end of history” was little more than a naïve hope, reflecting an idealistic belief in the perfectibility of man, the future compatibility or convergence of historically distinct civilizations, the peaceful resolution of all international conflicts, and the inevitability of human progress and desire for peace. As for pacifism, it was pointed out that the broadly pacifist inclinations of Europe, and the highly successful development of the EU – surely one of the world’s greatest achievements since World War II – were possible only under the protection of the American defense umbrella.

Sadly, subsequent experience has at least partly vindicated the skepticism of the realists. Conflicting economic and strategic interests have not simply disappeared from the international scene, and the fundamentally Hobbesian nature of the world has evidently not changed. The resurgence of assertive Russian nationalism is perhaps the most obvious example, but great power nationalism and traditional competition between nations and cultures seem to be re-appearing – if they ever disappeared - as central features of the geopolitical scene.

As global population and demand for of key resources like oil or water rise, but supply dwindles, competition for those resources seems likely to become a major source of international conflict.

**Second, religious fundamentalism has resurfaced, mainly in the form of fundamental Islam, whose teachings are fundamentally incompatible with – and hostile to - Western civilization**

Another threat to the rosy expectations of the post-cold war period, both internationally and at home, is the re-emergence of religious fundamentalism and terrorism. Few things are as dangerous as people convinced of their own god-given moral superiority.

Throughout history, one of the principal causes of war, persecution, bigotry and bloodshed has come from religious fundamentalists - whether Islamic, Christian, or others - claiming exclusive knowledge of divine will, and divine authority for imposing their beliefs willy-nilly on other individuals and societies. Ironically, the ferocity with which religious fundamentalists fight over their beliefs is typically in inverse proportion to their meaningfulness and relevance.

Fortunately, the absurd nature of such claims is now widely recognized. Religious tolerance, separation of church and state, and the broadly secular, rational, tolerant culture that has emerged in the West, are now widely accepted, despite residual pockets of religious fundamentalism - including, unfortunately, within the US. Even the Roman Catholic Church seems more or less to have come to terms, albeit belatedly, with the values of the Enlightenment - despite its tradition of dogmatic fundamentalism, intolerance, hypocrisy, corruption and Machiavellian alliances with secular powers.

The major exception to this enlightened trend is fundamental Islam - the last of the three "religions of the book" to take itself literally. The dogma, values, laws and ultimate goals of Islam appear to be fundamentally incompatible with those of the West. Its believers dream of reversing Islam's historical decline, restoring the caliphate to its former glory and imposing their primitive beliefs and laws on the rest of the world, by any means possible, however barbaric, in the name of Allah ([Appendix C](#)).

Israel is not the primary cause of the problem ([Appendix D](#)). Islamic hatred for Western civilization predates Zionism and Israel by many centuries. We should support Israel in its courageous struggle for survival against those who deny Israel's right to exist within defensible borders and who remain committed to destroy Israel and annihilate the Jews; and we should oppose those who unfairly malign Israel in the court of world opinion.

For Muslim believers, a Holy War against "infidels" is sanctioned and encouraged by the Koran. Islamic teachings are fundamentally incompatible with the core values of Western civilization, and - if the Mullahs are to be believed - dedicated to replacing Western freedoms and institutions with a revived Islamic caliphate and Sharia law. Islamic goals in this respect are laid out quite clearly in the Koran, the Haddith and the preachings of today's mullahs, just as clearly as Hitler laid out his goals in Mein Kampf.

Just as Europeans were reluctant to take Mein Kampf seriously until it was too late, smug Western liberals today refuse to take Islamic teachings seriously. But unfortunately many Muslims evidently do.

### **What happened to Islam?**

A thousand years ago, Islamic civilization was arguably the most advanced in the world - with the possible exception of China - and certainly played an important role in preserving some of the thinking and writings of classical Greek and Roman culture. In fact, while both Christianity and Islam were both highly intolerant of "infidels" who didn't share their beliefs, Islam was relatively the more tolerant. This was reflected in its treatment of Jews, many of whom migrated to Palestine and other Islamic countries specifically to escape the horrors of Christian persecution.

In Europe, the Enlightenment, based on revival of pre-Christian classical pagan culture, fueled a huge leap forward in social, political, legal, cultural, scientific and economic

progress. But the Arab/Islamic world has yet to have its Enlightenment and, after peaking around 1100 AD, began to decline drastically in terms of relative economic, technological, intellectual and social development.

The Islamic clerical establishments can have few doubts that, if they were to allow Western-style freedoms – such as the rule of law, equal rights for women, and freedom of speech – their claims to divine authority for their myths and dogma would be drastically undermined – just as theocratic privilege has largely disappeared in the West.

Perhaps the most important cause of Islam's decline has been the fundamentalist doctrine of Islamic teachers like Abu Hamid al-Ghazali in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and, more recently, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab – supported, in a mutually convenient alliance, by the Saudi Arabian government in order to win divine endorsement for its repressive autocracy (a classic strategy used throughout history by secular rulers, along with real or invented external threats, in order to divert attention from their own failings and to reinforce their own perceived legitimacy).

Al-Ghazali's classic work, "The Incoherence of the Philosophers" argued that everything that humans can possibly know or need to know is already contained in the Koran and the Hadith and that, by implication, any other teaching or research is either superfluous or blasphemous. Even today, Islamic teaching holds that everything written in the Koran was revealed directly to Mohammed by God; and that since the Arabic text has never been changed, everything in the Koran must be true and relevant as written.

The anti-intellectualism inspired by Al-Ghazali and his followers, and the Mullahs' claim to divine authority for their myths and dogma, have stifled intellectual curiosity and freedom in the Islamic world for a thousand years – in contrast with the spectacular progress achieved in the increasingly liberal and secular West.

### **"The laughing stock of the world"**

The resulting backwardness, intolerance, and repression have helped to make the Arab/Islamic countries, as one Arab scholar put it, "the laughing stock of the world". Their unfortunate children are prime recruits for the loony aspirations of Islamic fundamentalists. Deluded young men are persuaded by their mullahs to commit grotesque mass murders, encouraged by utterly puerile visions of an Islamic playboy-style heaven, to which they are led to believe they will be instantly transported when they blow themselves and their innocent victims to pieces - all in the name of Islam.

It may seem astonishing that such primitive beliefs could still persist in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Of course, the Islamic world is admittedly highly fragmented into racial, dogmatic and national schisms. But it remains generally united in its hatred of Western values. It seems unlikely that terrorism will ever be completely eliminated. Suicide bombing is just too easy and – if one were to believe the prospect of instant playboy-style bliss promised by the Muslim mullahs - attractive.

The UN Arab Human Development Reports – written by Arabs – testify to the miserably low level of human development in the Arab/Islamic countries (in contrast with the far higher standard of living enjoyed by Arab citizens of Israel). The UN reports attribute the problem to three major causes: political autocracy, absence of the rule of law, and an education system largely centered on Islamic dogma. Arab rulers typically seek political

legitimacy through alliances with the Islamic clerical establishment, to whom they virtually surrender their education systems.

### **Religion and Intelligence**

Many studies have identified significant differences in average IQs between different countries and ethnic groups, and several factors have been identified as being correlated – positively or inversely – with such differences. Differences in income, education, urban vs. rural population distribution, climate, and the prevalence of infectious diseases have all been cited as possible explanations for national differences in IQ. The inverse correlation between a country's disease burden and its average IQ score appears particularly strong.

Religion is not so often mentioned as a potential cause of such differences in IQ. However, based on a World Health Organization database of 192 countries, there is a marked inverse correlation between IQs and the prevalence of relatively dogmatic, fundamentalist religions that are less favorably disposed towards Enlightenment values like religious and intellectual freedom and free speech – Islam being a prime example. Among ethnic groups, Ashkenazi Jews – with a strong bias towards secular rationalism – score higher than any other ethnic group. And among countries, Median IQs are highest in the largely secular or Buddhist Sinic countries like China, Japan, Korea and Singapore (106), around average in Protestant countries (98), much lower in Catholic countries (86) and lowest in Islamic countries (84). The cause-and-effect relations may be difficult or impossible to unravel; but the positive correlation between IQs and the prevalence of Enlightenment values, and the inverse correlation between IQs and dogmatic religious fundamentalism, are certainly quite striking.

Note that the education level among Palestinian Arabs, thanks to the excellent, largely secular education provided by UNRWA in the refugee camps, is far higher than in surrounding Arab countries, where education is largely based on study of the Koran. More generally, however, Islamic education in Arab countries, based largely on study of the Koran, contrasts with the high levels of education in Israel itself: It has been said that “while Israeli families raise their children to be doctors, lawyers, architects, scientists, entrepreneurs and professors, the Arabs raise theirs to be terrorists and suicide bombers”.

### **The world is in a race against time to prevent the combination of fundamental Islam with weapons of mass destruction**

Of course, terrorism and fundamentalism are not always religious in nature. As a child in Europe during World War II, and as a soldier in Europe during the Cold War, I witnessed at first hand the epic struggles between fundamentalist ideologies that were primarily secular in nature. Today, however, the most immediate threat we face is religious in origin – especially Islam, with its notorious “bloody borders”. Anyone who believes that Islam is a “religion of peace” seems unlikely to have paid any attention to the murderous injunctions of the Koran, the Hadith, the current sermons of Muslim mullahs throughout the world, or the barbaric savagery of their believers.

It has been claimed that the most important struggle going on in the world today is the struggle between radical and “moderate” Muslims – essentially a Muslim civil war about which of two basic versions of Islam is correct, between fundamentalist and relatively

secular versions of Islam – over and above the basic schisms between Sunni and Shiite believers and other sects within Islam. Over the last forty years or so, the fundamentalist/Islamist side has clearly gained the upper hand, thanks largely to enormous financial backing from Saudi Arabia and other oil-rich Arab states, in support of Koran-based education and the propagation of fundamentalist Islam throughout the world – including in the West itself.

Some “moderate” Muslims claim to be opposed to the fundamentalist teaching that inspires Islamic goals of global domination and violence. However, few seem ready to stand up and condemn such teachings, or to openly oppose Islamic violence, or to distance themselves from Islamic goals and values or the underlying theological dogma.

Sadly, it appears that there will always be religious believers who will not or cannot be integrated into mainstream society and who believe, rightly or wrongly, that their divinely inspired goals can only be achieved by mass murder, however brutal and indiscriminate. Conciliatory gestures towards the Islamic world (such as President Obama’s Cairo speech) are all very well. However, there are times when we must recognize implacable enemies for what they are. We need to make it clear that **any religion that exhorts its believers to kill or subdue those who do not share their beliefs is absolutely unacceptable.**

The possibility of a nuclear-armed state like Pakistan being taken over by Islamic fundamentalists is particularly scary. The world is in a race against time to head off the potentially catastrophic combination of fundamental Islam and destructive technologies.

### **America must play a leading role in addressing these global threats**

Most of the above challenges are essentially global in nature and therefore require integrated global solutions. Some of them may be literally “survival issues” for the human race – global warming, for example, or the convergence of Islamic beliefs with destructive technologies. Eventually, we may speculate, some form of “world government” may prove necessary – however distasteful such a concept might be to advocates of small, limited government.

The major powers – and the whole world - share a common interest in working together to address the global issues that we all face. And America, historically perhaps the most benign superpower the world has ever seen, still has the potential to play a major role – albeit as *primus inter pares* – in this process. However, the increasingly multipolar nature of the world order, together with the effects of America’s recent foreign policy blunders, makes this an especially daunting task. Unity of purpose and cooperation between the US and EU – together with other powers – will be especially important.

In the first few years after the collapse of the USSR, the structure of world power seemed to have become largely unipolar, with America more or less unchallenged as the sole superpower. However the “rise of the rest” discussed above, together with rapid globalization, has produced a far more multipolar – perhaps even “nonpolar” – world, in which the influence of other powers has increased substantially and America’s power, though still by far the greatest, has been relatively diluted.

### **In order to do so, America must return to multilateralism in foreign policy – while retaining a clear grasp of reality and recognizing enemies for what they are**

Despite a natural preference for idealism and altruism, we live in what is still an essentially Hobbesian world. Diplomacy and soft power have their place in international relations, of course; but history shows that pacifism and appeasement, however idealistic, don't work. Whenever the avoidance of confrontation has been the primary objective of a society or nation, it has inevitably put itself at the mercy of its most ruthless enemies, who will not hesitate to exploit such weakness. Islam is no exception. International order does not rest on ideals, treaties or supranational organizations alone; ultimately, it is shaped by balances of power. And the first duty of the US government is to protect the security of the American people.

Of course, while recognizing the need to confront enemies we must also seek an effective balance between the often competing demands of idealism vs. realism in foreign policy. The US seems likely to remain the dominant economic and military power for the foreseeable future. But the balance of economic and strategic power is clearly shifting, as newly resurgent powers gain share of the post-cold war world economy - the "rise of the rest", led by the "BRICs". Russia, in particular, is clearly not willing to accept a secondary role in a unipolar world under American hegemony. Moreover, America's imperial overreach in the Middle East has left us severely overstretched, both strategically and financially, with very few options for responding to other challenges – such as Russia's resurgent imperialism.

Clearly, we must recognize the increasingly multipolar nature of the post-cold war world. The first priority is to reverse our catastrophic foreign policy blunders of the past few years, and address the factors that have undermined the power of America's moral example and its credibility as a world leader.

One thing is sure: a deliberate quest for unilateral hegemony is a sure way to alienate our allies and potential partners, and to create enemies; it also threatens our own liberties. We must reverse the recent trend towards unilateralism, exceptionalism, neo-conservatism and simplistic dogma that has alienated many of our allies, and rediscover the potential gains to be had from talking with our enemies as well as with our friends. As Samuel Huntington pointed out,

*"Western intervention in the affairs of other civilizations is probably the single most dangerous source of instability and potential conflict in a multi-civilized world".*

America needs to work with the other great powers, including the newly rising powers (the BRICs) as well as our traditional allies, on a multilateral basis - perhaps as "primus inter pares" in a system of "one superpower, many great powers". The highly successful postwar international system that America played a leading role in creating must be updated; the newly rising powers must be integrated as full members of the system. Multilateralism is essential if we are to be effective.

At the same time, we must recognize the enemies of civilization, and of America, for what they are, and we must be ready to resist their barbarism by all means, including the use of force when necessary, to protect vital national interests – preferably with the agreement and support of other powers.

**At home, we cannot assume the sustainability of democracy, which in its current form contains some potentially fatal flaws**

It would be a mistake to attribute the wonderful freedoms of Western civilization exclusively to democracy in its current forms. The political, religious and intellectual liberalization of the Enlightenment evolved under a variety of monarchies, oligarchies, dictatorships and aristocratic systems that were far from democratic. The gradual devolution of power, from absolute monarchy to a progressively wider political base, has been under way for centuries, from Magna Carta onwards. It was already well advanced two centuries before culminating in today's form of popular sovereignty - which, after all, did not occur until the 1920s in the UK and, arguably, not until the 1960s or later in the USA.

In fact "democracy" as the term is nowadays understood is really composed of two basic elements:

- First, the personal liberties and restraints on the power of government described above – essential features of our civilization, but not necessarily dependent on popular democracy
- Second, popular democracy, or rule by the people through universal suffrage.

It was not until the 20<sup>th</sup> century that these two elements of democracy – liberty and popular sovereignty respectively - were more or less successfully combined. Historically, economic liberty – including the rule of law and property rights – came well before political liberty; it was the resulting economic growth and the emergence of a strong middle class that created the preconditions and pressures leading to democracy, rather than the other way round – a fact that the current rulers of China have clearly taken note of.

A central virtue of Western democracy is its recognition that there is, as Jefferson put it, "*no safe depositary of the ultimate powers of our society but the people themselves*". However, popular democracy in its current forms is far from perfect. On the contrary, it contains some major weaknesses to which we must remain constantly alert. It was traditionally regarded – at least by the upper classes – not as a complement but as a threat to liberty, the rule of law, religious and political freedom and property rights. Why? Because it was expected to bring corruption, disorder, mob rule, the breakdown of private property, and ultimately tyranny.

**The conflicts of wealth creation vs. wealth redistribution, and of competition vs. equality, are still very much with us and will perhaps never be fully resolved**

Earlier, we reviewed some of the conflicts that any civilization or society must resolve in one way or another. Central among these is the distribution of wealth and power. Throughout history, almost all forms of society have shown a seemingly inevitable tendency for power and wealth to become concentrated in the hands of a relatively small group – "the establishment", "ruling class", "oligarchy", "aristocracy", "elite", or whatever we may choose to call it. And as William Morris put it,

- "*The rich will strive to establish their dominion and enslave the rest. They always did. They always will*".

Thus, a central issue facing all societies throughout history has been how to achieve – and to preserve - an effective balance between those who have power and wealth and the have-nots. As Brooks Adams put it:

- *“The sole problem of our ruling class is whether to coerce or bribe the majority”.*

Throughout history, various attempts have been made to find the most effective balance between the extremes of “coercion” and “bribery” as Adams put it, and between the competing priorities of wealth creation vs. wealth redistribution, and of competition vs. egalitarianism. Within the West, the long term trend has been towards ever greater devolution of economic and political power to the masses, together with correspondingly increased emphasis on wealth re-distribution and government intervention.

In America, this trend culminated in FDR’s New Deal, Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society and in subsequent further extensions of the Welfare State. It has generally advanced earlier and further in the social democracies of postwar Europe compared with the relatively rugged form of market capitalism that still prevails in America. In Germany, for example, state-funded social welfare was first introduced by Bismark in the 1870s, to help meet the need for social stability in the newly unified and rapidly industrializing state.

**The welfare or “nanny” state is probably here to stay, but contains inherent weaknesses that could lead to its downfall**

Clearly, some degree of welfare is an essential component in any stable form of capitalist society. Together with the progressive devolution of political power to the masses, it has drastically reduced the extremes of social and economic inequality that plagued earlier forms of capitalism. By doing so it has helped to avert the unrest, revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat that, according to Karl Marx, were inevitably destined to replace capitalism. And by “buying” domestic tranquility in this way, it has made possible the wonderful flowering of capitalist market democracy that we have inherited. The key elements of the welfare state are now widely regarded throughout the West as virtually sacrosanct.

On the downside, however, the actual results of popular democracy and the welfare state point to a potentially fatal flaw in democracy itself, perhaps best summarized in the words attributed, rightly or wrongly, to Alexander Tyler:

- *“A democracy is always temporary in nature; it simply cannot exist as a permanent form of government. A democracy will continue to exist until the time that voters discover that they can vote themselves generous gifts from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates who promise the most benefits from the public treasury...”*

Since the failure of Newt Gingrich’s valiant attempt with his “Contract with America”, no politician has dared to confront voters with the need to address the approaching bankruptcy of America’s welfare system. In terms of political feasibility, “entitlements” are perhaps irretrievably sacrosanct and, in effect, untouchable – despite the fact that “entitlements” are fiscally unsustainable at anything like their current levels; and despite the demoralizing effect of over-dependence on such entitlements. Human dignity – a goal shared by the left and the right of the political spectrum – resides, ultimately, in

independence, individuality and self-determination, and not in over-dependence on a benevolent and paternalistic government.

**Another inherent weakness in democracy is the lack of “a well informed electorate” – together with low voter participation rates**

Our founding fathers recognized that an enlightened citizenry is essential for the proper functioning of a republic. They were therefore fearful of giving political power to the masses, and they were almost as concerned about the potential risks of democracy as of the monarchy from which they had freed themselves. They therefore preferred to leave power in the hands of a property-owning aristocracy whose wisdom and judgment they trusted more than that of the common people. As Alexander Hamilton put it:

- *“The people are turbulent and changing; they seldom judge or determine right. Give therefore the rich and wellborn a distinct, permanent share of the government”.*

Thomas Jefferson, on the other hand, argued in favor of relatively broad based democracy; but while recognizing that this required a “well informed electorate”, he argued that this requirement could be achieved by establishing an effective education system. As he wrote:

- *“I know no safe depositary of the ultimate powers of our society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education”.*

But how well are we meeting this educational need, given the lamentable decline of public education over the last few decades, together with the increasing focus of the media - largely controlled by corporate interests - on entertainment rather than on serious news and analysis, their vulgar glorification of anti-social mores, and the relativistic teachings of our “intelligentsia”? As Churchill put it:

- *“The biggest argument against democracy is a five minute conversation with the average voter”.*

It can be argued (as Plato did) that voters may be too ignorant to assess how best to reach certain broad goals, even when those goals are clearly defined. But it may similarly be argued that they may not be well enough informed to choose those goals in the first place. Moreover, while it may be argued that democracies typically display an aversion to war, we should remember that Hitler was elected by a democratic vote. And ancient Athens’ disastrous decision to embark on a series of expansionist wars was enthusiastically endorsed by a democratic vote.

**“The worst rise to the top in politics”: we get the leaders we deserve, and they leave much to be desired**

Clearly, it takes strong leadership to address unpalatable issues, and to confront the public squarely with difficult – but ultimately inescapable - choices and unpopular solutions. However, in America as elsewhere, voters are generally reluctant to face harsh economic realities, or to recognize that services provided by the government must

be paid for, that there is no free lunch, and that hard choices must be made between competing demands for limited resources.

Voters do not like politicians who remind them of these truths. And as the saying goes, we get the leaders we deserve. The winners in any election are likely to be the politicians who succeed in persuading the electorate – or the roughly 50% who actually take the trouble to vote - that the laws of economics can be safely ignored. A politician who insists on telling the truth about hard but inescapable economic choices is unlikely to be elected. It is therefore not surprising that democracy leads almost inevitably to the emergence of a class of career politicians, whose primary focus is on gaining and retaining power, and who do so by “buying” our votes - using our own money. Candidates for political office find themselves competing with populists and demagogues who pander to the ignorance, greed or apathy of the majority, and their resulting vulnerability to disingenuous and unaffordable promises.

Moreover, given the enormous cost nowadays of competing for political office, most politicians are heavily beholden to their donors. Not surprisingly, they are inclined to serve the interests of their donors whenever they conflict with those of the public at large. No wonder their venality is such a far cry from the disinterested wisdom and idealism of the “philosopher kings” envisaged in Plato’s “Republic”. As one writer put it:

- *“When it costs \$100 million to create a presidential candidate, he is not going to show much interest in the people at large. He will represent the folks who gave him the \$100 million”. Or, as the saying goes, “ya gotta dance with them that brung ya”.*

**The global financial crisis of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, while it does not invalidate the basic values of market capitalism, points clearly to the need for more effective application of the rule of law in financial markets**

In America and Europe, growing faith in big government, central planning and state ownership was at least temporarily slowed, if not reversed, in the so-called Reagan-Thatcher revolution of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, discussed earlier. Practical experience had vindicated the wisdom of Hayek, Milton Friedman and their followers. Socialism seemed to be finally discredited, and the efficacy of free markets and competition were widely recognized. In the UK, even the traditionally socialist Labor Party finally renounced its historical commitment to public ownership of the means of production and distribution – despite vigorous opposition from the party’s traditional left wing holdouts.

The crisis that appeared in 2007 does not discredit the manifest advantages of market capitalism and small government. Rather, the prime causes of the current crisis have more to do with overly complex, fragmented and incompetent regulation – in effect, failure to enforce the rule of law in financial markets - rather than lack of regulation; and to political interference and incompetence. The financial crisis highlights the need for regulatory systems to catch up with developments in financial technology and globalization. It also reflects failure to address the huge and unsustainable imbalances in international trade and investment, or the equally unsustainable structural fiscal deficits of the US and other Western states (Appendix E)

Perhaps most importantly, the financial crisis undermined, at least temporarily, the widespread trust on which markets are fundamentally dependent. Failure to restore

order and confidence in global capital markets could seriously undermine the global economy, and could potentially – as in the 1930s – undermine democracy itself.

Sadly, the brilliant achievements of market capitalism have been quickly forgotten by those more interested in wealth re-distribution rather than wealth creation. Predictably, left-leaning politicians have been quick to blame deregulation and market capitalism for the crisis. Almost inevitably, recession has led politicians, with an almost knee-jerk, politically motivated reaction, to revive Smoot-Hawley type protectionism which, if implemented, could lead to a repetition of the great depression of the 1930s.

Hopefully, the results of the crisis may include a more effectively regulated financial system, and less tolerance of the extreme inequalities that have emerged over the last few years. Hopefully, too, we are not about to see America's relatively robust form of capitalism replaced by European-type socialism. However, we must expect the government to play an enlarged role in certain sectors, including healthcare, energy and education, in addition to financial regulation.

To restore trust in capital markets, regulatory systems must catch up with the rapid development of financial technology and with the globalization of capital markets. It will also entail a partial - but hopefully temporary - re-expansion of "big government's" role in the economy which, with monetary solutions virtually exhausted, will require Keynesian fiscal solutions to kick start the economy. This in turn will require finding a balance between (1) lower tax rates and reductions in the size, intrusiveness and cost of government and (2) increased spending by the government itself, financed, presumably, by higher taxes and/or increased government debt.

The fiscal implications of either of these two options have still to be worked out. But they certainly include some combination of huge increases in government debt and/or taxation, both in the US and in other countries, and large cuts in government spending – either of which will have long term repercussions on global capital markets and interest rates (Appendix C), and potentially on political stability.

### **Meanwhile, America faces the serious consequences of "imperial overstretch"**

Civilizations have risen and fallen, and there are some discernible patterns in the way they have done so. A dozen or so seminal macro-historians (such as Gibbon, Spengler, Toynbee, Herman Kahn, Kennedy, Huntington, and Kaplan) have studied the rise and fall of civilizations. They have generally pointed to three basic phases in the process:

- When civilizations first emerge, their people are usually vigorous, dynamic, brutal, mobile, and expansionist. They are relatively uncivilized. As the civilization evolves it becomes more settled and develops the techniques and skills that make it more civilized.
- As the competition among its constituent elements tapers off and a universal state emerges, the civilization reaches its highest levels, its golden age, with a flowering of morality, art, literature, philosophy, technology, and martial, economic and political competence.
- As decadence sets in, the civilization declines until it disappears under the onslaught of a more primitive but more vital culture.

Two factors, in particular, seem to have contributed to the onset of this third stage in earlier civilizations: First, in almost all previous empires, overhead costs – maintenance of the army, the central government, and the elite or aristocracies – have tended to get out of control. Paul Kennedy, especially, argues that “imperial overstretch” - the conflict between a weakening economy and growing military or totalitarian aims - has been a major causal factor in the collapse of empires including, most recently, the Soviet Union. The second factor, best described as “cultural relativism” is discussed later.

**In sum, America – and to some extent the rest of the West - is headed for serious fiscal and political crises that, if not properly addressed, could undermine democracy in its current forms, and will certainly impact the whole global economy**

Even before the credit crisis that emerged in 2007, the US was already on the path to a major financial crisis due to its huge and unsustainable fiscal deficits (largely caused, in turn, by unsustainable levels of social security and other “entitlements”). The Keynesian fiscal strategies that are being applied in order to boost the US economy following the credit crisis, while arguably necessary in the short term, will surely result in vastly expanded fiscal deficits in the US and elsewhere. Other advanced economies face comparable problems.

The resulting global surge in government funding needs – coming at a time when the global economic slowdown is impacting the supply of capital – will put huge strains on global capital markets. The supply of long term US Treasuries, in particular, will far exceed demand at current prices, and their price will surely fall sharply (i.e. yields will rise sharply). This in turn will dampen economic growth both in the US and globally. Expectations of rapid recovery in the global economy (“green shoots”) appear highly optimistic.

Sooner or later – the sooner the better – the government must confront the American public with the need to face up to this looming crisis and the necessity of resolving these imbalances, which are essentially structural rather than cyclical in nature. But it seems unlikely that the hard decisions that need to be made can be made within the constraints of current democracy. It seems more likely that professional politicians – more concerned with achieving and keeping power than with the good of the nation – will opportunistically exploit the public’s reluctance to face the truth, thus undermining honest attempts to address the problem.

**But probably the biggest internal challenge facing our civilization - like previous civilizations - is cultural relativism**

Cultural relativism can be defined as a widespread dilution of appreciation for the distinctive values and institutions of our civilization, and of commitment to uphold and support them. Without such commitment our society and its uniquely marvelous freedoms are highly vulnerable. But many people who complacently enjoy the freedoms of Western society are nevertheless lukewarm in their support for the values and institutions that have made such freedoms possible, and quick with smug, facile criticisms of the civilization they have been so fortunate to inherit, and of the struggles of their forebears to win the freedoms they now enjoy.

We live in an age of extraordinary diversity – ethnic, religious, racial and cultural. Perhaps nowhere is this truer than in my native city of London, or in my current home town of San Francisco where, as Mayor Newsom recently put it, “diversity lies at the very core of our city’s character”. Diversity in itself is, of course, a welcome feature of a free and tolerant society. However, some people would go further, arguing that cultural values are essentially relative, that all cultures and civilizations are somehow equal in value and none better or worse than others – or more worth supporting.

History shows that a civilization is unlikely to thrive unless it is solidly based on shared commitment to clearly defined core values. That commitment must override any differences in secondary values or loyalties – religious, political, ethnic or cultural. A society that loses commitment to its core values and institutions – including readiness to defend them robustly when they are threatened - may decline and fall like Ancient Rome. Declining consensus or commitment to Western values, either within America or between America and Europe, could be a fatal weakness.

It is unwise to suppose that either Europe or America can safely ignore the lessons of history. As Viscount Montgomery put it shortly after World War II:

*“If the West is to survive, it must evolve a far greater degree of common purpose and common responsibility than exists today”*

Ironically, cultural relativism – broadly reflected in contemporary art forms and popular culture - is partly a by-product of the West’s own success. The unprecedented mass affluence created by Western capitalism – and the resulting freedom of individuals to focus on personal fulfillment - has had a number of side-effects. Not all those side effects have been positive. One of them has been a decline in respect for the very same values on which capitalism’s success was built. This applies especially to those values that are perceived, rightly or wrongly, as conflicting with the individual’s search for personal fulfillment – e.g. respect for authority, law and order, loyalty, sacrifice, hard work, trust, personal responsibility and civic duty.

Cultural relativism in the West is no doubt further exacerbated by a large influx of immigrants bringing alien cultural values, their reluctance or inability to integrate, and in some cases – especially among Muslims - their outright hostility to the values and institutions of their host country.

Immigration is a fact of life and, given the declining birth rates of native-born citizens, an economic necessity in advanced countries. However, cultural relativism has evidently diluted the coherence of Western culture and value systems, and the resolve of Western governments – especially, it seems, in Europe – to recognize and confront the risks posed by lack of integration, especially the threat of home-grown Muslim intransigence, treason and terrorism.

Should we be surprised when no less a figure than the Archbishop of Canterbury – head of the Church of England and the worldwide Anglican Community, the supposed guardian of some of our most fundamental values – not only casts doubt on central beliefs of the Christian faith (understandable, perhaps, but still rather surprising in the head of a church that for centuries has preached those beliefs as absolute and God-given) but also predicts that partial introduction of Islamic Sharia law in the UK is “inevitable”, and argues in favor of “constructive accommodation” with the laws of Islam

– a religion whose basic teachings are fundamentally incompatible with the core values of Western civilization?

### **The symptoms of malfunction are all around us**

Cultural diversity is fine, of course, but the cultural relativists are wrong, I believe, in thinking that all cultures and civilizations are somehow equal in value. The brilliant success of Western civilization is attributable specifically to its distinctive values and its willingness to stand up for those values. In today's affluent and permissive society, facing the perennial need to balance individual rights vs. responsibilities, we have seen a dramatic shift of emphasis in our value system towards rights and entitlements, and away from duties and responsibilities. We have also seen a widespread dilution of appreciation for the values – and the struggles and courage of our ancestors - that made our precious freedoms possible.

The result has been a marked decline in social cohesion, public mindedness and commitment to the core values of our society. Rising levels of social welfare, permissiveness and the “nanny state” seem to correlate closely with declines in civic mindedness, responsibility, self reliance and respect for the rule of law.

Have we moved too far in this direction? The evidence is all around us.

The weaknesses discussed earlier – perhaps inherent in any popular democracy - have contributed in America to an increasingly dysfunctional political system, and a broad drift away from the spirit and letter of the Constitution that accelerated alarmingly under recent administrations. The symptoms, many of which are shared by other Western democracies, include:

- Seemingly inexorable growth in the size, cost and intrusiveness of government;
- Insidious expansion of federal power and intrusiveness vs. state and local autonomy, in clear breach of the 10<sup>th</sup> Amendment
- Creeping expansion in the power of the Executive branch at the expense of the Legislature and Judiciary, eroding the separation of powers and the constitutional checks and balances intended to safeguard us from “imperial” rule
- An increasingly dysfunctional and venal Congress, dominated by flagrant pork barrel spending and distortion of markets in favor of special interests;
- The unwillingness of politicians to square with the public in confronting problems such as a nearly insolvent welfare system, a hopelessly complex, incomprehensible and distorted tax system, and a failed and corrupting “war on drugs”
- Trivialization and vulgarization of “entertainment” and the arts – arguably a leading indicator of cultural decline ([Appendix F](#))
- The growing dominance of corporate and other special interests in formulating domestic and foreign policy
- The trivialization of political debate, disingenuous partisan bickering, and growing focus on rights and entitlements rather than on responsibilities and duties
- Fiscal irresponsibility, resulting in unsustainable fiscal imbalances and public indebtedness - further aggravated by the impact of “imperial over-stretch”
- Weak political leaders, driven by near term opinion polls and political advantage rather than by clearly defined principles and strategies.

No wonder many of our best potential leaders are deterred from entering or remaining in politics by distaste for the disingenuous partisan bickering and personal attack politics that characterize much of contemporary political debate.

**Given these weaknesses, Western democracy in its current form could conceivably break down**

As discussed earlier, despite its obvious benefits, our nominally “democratic” system is far from perfect, and faces some potentially life-threatening internal challenges. In America, despite the outward forms of popular democracy, our country is arguably already closer in practice to an oligarchy than to a democracy. As James Madison predicted,

- *“The countenance of the government may become democratic, but the soul that animates it will be more oligarchic...”*

Indignation and dissatisfaction with the venality, ineffectiveness, dishonesty and arrogance of professional politicians as a class is widespread. Yet what are the alternatives? As Churchill famously remarked:

- *“Many forms of government have been tried, and will be tried, in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government, except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time...”*

Still, unless we find ways to correct the weaknesses in our nominally democratic system it is not inconceivable that the system itself could eventually break down, to be replaced by some alternative form of government – less venal and more effective, perhaps, but almost certainly less “democratic” and more decisive. Failure to resolve the financial crisis of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century would exacerbate this threat. There are many precedents from other countries, and many potential scenarios even for America - despite our strong democratic traditions.

One potential scenario might be a continuation of the progressive centralization of federal executive power – a trend already established under the Bush/Cheney administration - to a point where we would have, in effect, a dictatorship – probably with the backing of the “military industrial complex”. Another conceivable scenario might be an outright takeover by a patriotic military, supported by a restless population, impatient with the venality and ineffectiveness of our professional politicians. Such a scenario, while it may appear very unlikely, would be especially plausible in the event of a serious national crisis of some kind, such as a major breakdown in our financial and economic system.

We must not dismiss historical precedents as irrelevant to today’s issues. Julius Caesar, after all, was in his way an idealist, and responded to issues that were, in many ways, almost eerily comparable to those we face today.

**As individuals, we need to commit ourselves to the ongoing functioning, improvement and defense of our civilization**

History suggests that a society that loses commitment to its core values – and willingness to support them - is likely to decline and fall, giving way to primitive but more vigorous cultures. And the few cases of “democracy” that have been tried throughout history, have been short lived. Clearly, we do not want this to happen to our form of democracy. But as individuals, what can we do? Earlier, I argued that

- *“the ideal civilization is one that best provides the personal and material freedoms that enable us to pursue answers to the fundamental mysteries of creation and of consciousness, as part of our overall quest for fulfillment and enlightenment”.*

We are indeed lucky to have been born in a civilization that, arguably, meets this criterion better than any other in history.

However, we must remember that the marvelous, hard-won freedoms we enjoy are potentially very fragile; we cannot take them for granted; they entail responsibilities as well as rights, and they depend on the informed commitment of us, the people. Those who habitually complain about the imperfections in Western society, who disdain its values and responsibilities, or who take its blessings for granted, would do well to remember how much they owe to their forebears, from whom they inherited it, and to consider the alternatives.

If we are to preserve our freedoms, we must all commit our energies to support the ongoing effectiveness, improvement and, when necessary, the vigorous defense of the civilization that we are so fortunate to have inherited. We can contribute in many ways and in many kinds of role - as leaders, thinkers, entrepreneurs, workers, activists, parents, artists and teachers. A few seek and achieve the highest levels of excellence, knowledge, enlightenment and leadership. Such people, and their achievements, are the flower of civilization – the deepest thinkers and pioneers in the quest for enlightenment, the best philosophers, scientists, poets, musicians, scholars, artists, leaders, men of action, historians, and mystics. This elite consists of a small minority of people; few reach the level of ability, commitment, will and excellence that defines them as a group. But their achievements are the flower of civilization, and a major achievement of civilization is to develop, nurture and support such heroes, by providing the socio-economic infrastructure and intellectual freedom in which they can flourish.

We should especially honor warriors, whose responsibility is to defend our civilization against the “barbarians at the gate” with courage, discipline, skill, dedication, honor and self sacrifice – the traditional military virtues, often sadly lacking in other sectors of the population. They are often looked down on in times of peace and complacency, when there is often a naïve tendency to suppose that all international disputes can be peacefully resolved through appeasement and negotiation, and a corresponding distaste for warriors and martial values. But like it or not, warriors, and the willingness to use disciplined force as the ultimate protector of society, have always been and will probably remain an essential component of civilization.

Many of us try various roles in the course of our lives. But whatever roles we choose, however big or small, informed commitment to improving, advancing and, when necessary, defending the core values and institutions of the civilization we are so fortunate to have inherited is essential. Without commitment we personally drift; but with commitment we can contribute to the survival and continuing progress of what is still,

despite its acknowledged imperfections, the most promising civilization the world has ever seen.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY

Cole, K.C: The Universe and the Teacup  
Davies, Paul: The Mind of God  
Einstein, Albert: Relativity  
Greene, Brian: The Elegant Universe  
Gribbin, John: Schrodinger's Kittens  
Gribbin, John: The Search for Superstrings  
Hawking, Stephen: A Brief History of Time  
Hawking, Stephen: The Universe in a Nutshell  
Hoffman, Banesh: The Strange Story of the Quantum  
Kaku, Michio: Hyperspace  
Kauffman, Stuart: At Home in the Universe  
Magneijo: Faster than the Speed of Light  
McFarlane, Thomas: Einstein and Buddha  
Weinberg, Steven: Dreams of a Final Theory

### MIND & BODY

Aleksander, Igor: How to Build a Brain  
Ayer, A.J: Language, Truth and Logic  
Blackmore, Susan: Consciousness  
Bruce, Robert: Astral Dynamics  
Buhlman, William: Adventures Beyond the Body  
Cockerell, Jean: Across Time and Death  
Crick, Francis: The Astonishing Hypothesis  
Dalai Lama: Advice on Dying  
Darling, David: Life Everywhere  
Dawkins, Richard: The Selfish Gene  
Dawkins, Richard: The God Delusion  
Dennett, Daniel: Consciousness Explained  
Dennett, Daniel: Darwin Explained: Evolution & the Meanings of Life  
Eccles, Sir John (ed.): Mind and Brain  
Edelman, Gerald: A Universe of Consciousness  
Garreau, Joel: Radical Evolution  
Greenfield, Susan: The Human Brain  
Hitchens, Christopher: God is Not Great  
Huxley, Aldous: The Doors of Perception  
Huxley, Thomas: Collected Works  
Huxley, Aldous: Heaven & Hell, and Doors of Perception  
Jaynes, Julian: The Origin of Consciousness  
Jung, C.G: Memories, Dreams, Reflections  
Kubler-Ross, Elizabeth: On Life After Death

Kubler-Ross: On Death and Dying  
Kurzweil, Ray: The Law of Accelerating Returns  
Kurzweil, Ray: The Singularity is Near  
Laszlo, Ervin: Science and the Akashic Field  
Mitchell, Janet Lee: Out-of-Body Experiences  
Monroe, Robert: Journeys Out of the Body  
Murphy, Michael: The Future of the Body  
Pinker, Steven: How the Mind Works  
Pinker, Steven: The Blank Slate;  
Radin, Dean: The Conscious Universe  
Radin, Dean: Entangled Minds  
Ruse and Travis: Evolution  
Sabom, Michael: Light and Death  
Smed, Jouni: Out of Body Experience FAQ  
Springer, Chris et al: Complete World of Human Evolution  
Tart, Charles: Six Studies of Out-of-the-Body Experience  
Tibetan Book of the Dead  
Tyrell, G: The Personality of Man  
Tyrell, G: The Nature of Human Personality

#### ANCIENT HISTORY

Caesar, Julius: The Gallic Wars  
Gibbon, Edward: Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire  
Herodotus: The Histories  
Holland, Tom: Rubicon: The Last Years of the Roman Republic  
Homer: The Iliad  
Johnson, Paul: The Renaissance  
Livy: The War with Hannibal  
Plutarch: The Rise and Fall of Athens  
Tacitus: The Histories  
Thucydides: History of the Peloponnesian War

#### CIVILIZATION & HISTORY

Bagwati, Jagdish: In Defense of Globalization  
Blankley, Tony: The West's Last Chance  
Boaz, David: The Politics of Freedom  
Bodansky, Yossef: The High Cost of Peace  
Boston Globe: Betrayal: The Crisis in the Catholic Church  
Cato Institute: The Cato Handbook on Policy  
Chan, Gordon: The Coming Collapse of China  
Clarke, Richard: Against All Enemies  
Cooper, Robert: The Breaking of Nations  
Diamond, Jared: Guns, Germs and Steel  
Diamond, Jared: The Third Chimpanzee  
Easterly, William: The White Man's Burden  
Emmott, Bill: 20:21 Vision  
Ferguson, Niall: Colossus  
Friedman, George: America's Secret War  
Friedman, Thomas: From Beirut to Jerusalem

Friedman, Thomas: Longitudes and Attitudes  
 Friedman, Thomas: The Lexus and the Olive Tree  
 Gerseman: Cowboy Capitalism  
 Gold, Dore: Tower of Babble  
 Goldhagen, Daniel: Moral Reckoning -The Catholic Church in the Holocaust  
 Griffith, Melanie: Londonistan  
 Harris, Lee: Civilization and its Enemies  
 Hart, Gary: The Fourth Power  
 Hasseler, Stephen: Super-State: The New Europe  
 Hayek, Friedrich: The Fatal Conceit  
 Hayek, Friedrich: The Road to Serfdom  
 Hayek, Friedrich: Individualism and Economic Order  
 Hayek, Friedrich: The Constitution of Liberty  
 Hill, Charles, in "The Age of Terror" (ed. S. Talbott)  
 Hill, Stephen: Europe's Promise: Why the European Way is Best  
 Huntington, Samuel: The Clash of Civilizations (essay and book)  
 Huntington, Samuel: Who Are We?  
 Johnson, Paul: Intellectuals  
 Johnson, Paul: Modern Times Revisited  
 Kagan, Robert: Of Paradise and Power (essay and book)  
 Kagan, Robert: The Return of History  
 Kahn, Herman: World Economic Development  
 Koo, Richard: The Holy Grail of Macroeconomics  
 Friedman, Milton: Capitalism and Freedom  
 Kaplan, Robert D: The Coming Anarchy  
 Kaplan, Robert: Warrior Politics  
 Keegan, John: Intelligence in War  
 Kennedy, Paul: The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers  
 Landes, David: The Wealth and Poverty of Nations  
 Levitt, Steven: Freakonomics  
 Lindsey, Brink: The Age of Abundance  
 Mandelbaum, Michael: The Ideas that Conquered the World  
 Mees, Edwin: The Heritage Guide to the Constitution  
 Moore, Mike: A World without Walls  
 Ohmae, Kenichi: The End of the Nation State  
 Ohmae, Kenichi: The Next Global Stage  
 Peters, Ralph: Fighting for the Future  
 Porter, Michael: The Competitive Advantage of Nations  
 Roberts, J.M: History of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century  
 Roberts, JM: History of the World  
 Schur, Nathan: The Relevant History of Mankind  
 Sharansky, Natan: The Case for Democracy  
 Shawcross, William: The US, Britain and Europe  
 Smith, Koch: Suicide of the West  
 Spengler, Oswald: The Decline of the West  
 Tawney, R: Religion and the Rise of Capitalism  
 Toynbee, Arnold: A Study of History  
 Uris, Leon: The Haj  
 Weber, Max: Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism  
 Woods, Thomas: The Politically Incorrect Guide to American History  
 Yergin, Daniel: The Commanding Heights

Yergin, Daniel: The Prize: Oil, Money and Power  
Zielenziger, Michael: Shutting out the Sun

## AMERICA

Bartlett, Bruce: Impostor – How Bush Bankrupted America  
Brookings Institute (Daalder/Lindsay): America Unbound  
Brzezinski, Zbigniew: Second Chance  
Eldredge, Dirk: Ending the War on Drugs  
Fukuyama, Francis: America at the Crossroads  
Gamble, Adam and Watanabe, Takesato: A Public Betrayed  
Garrison, Jim: America as Empire  
Gray, Judge James P: Why Our Drug Laws Have Failed  
Johnson, Chalmers: Nemesis  
Johnson, Paul: A History of the American People  
Kissinger, Henry: Does America Need a Foreign Policy?  
O'Neill, John: Unfit for Command  
Phillips, Kevin: American Dynasty  
Phillips, Kevin: American Theocracy  
Patten, Chris: Cousins and Strangers  
Powell, Jim: FDR's Folly  
Powell, Jim: Wilson's Wars  
Prestowitz, Clyde: Rogue State  
Sykes, Charles: Dumbing Down our Kids  
The Declaration of Independence  
The US Constitution  
The White House: The National Security Strategy of the USA  
Todd, Emanuel: After the Empire: The Breakdown of the American Order  
Vidal, Gore: Decline & Fall of the American Empire  
Vidal, Gore: Imperial America  
Ziauddin, Sardar: Why People Hate America

## ECONOMICS AND FINANCE

Bradley, Robert: Capitalism at Work  
Clowes, Michael: The Money Flood  
Flickenstein, William: Greenspan's Bubble  
Koo, Richard: The Holy Grail  
McQuown, Mac: Illuminated Guide to Portfolio Management  
Miller, Merton: Derivatives  
Putnam, Bluford: Blackwell Guide to Wall Street  
Shiller, Robert: Irrational Exuberance  
Skousen, Mark: The Making of Modern Economics  
Tett, Gillian: Saving the Sun: A Wall Street Gamble to Save Japan  
Von Mises Institute: 15 Great Austrian Economists  
Wolf, Martin: Fixing Global Finance

## THE MIDDLE EAST, ISRAEL and ISLAM

Ayaan Hirsi Ali: Infidel  
Bat Ye'or: Eurabia

Bard, Mitchell: Will Israel Survive?  
Beckmann, Rene: A Wall in Palestine  
Ben-Ami, Shlomo: Scars of War  
Bethell, Nicholas: The Palestine Triangle  
Bonner, Elena: Lament in Oslo  
Carter, Jimmy: Palestine – Peace Not Apartheid  
Chomsky, Noam: Fateful Triangle  
Dawood, N.J: The Koran (translation)  
Dershowitz, Alan: The Case for Israel  
Dershowitz, Alan: The Case Against Israel's Enemies  
Dowty, Alan: Israel/Palestine  
Drummond, Dorothy: Holy Land, Whose Land?  
Gerstenfeld, Manfred: Anti-Semitism in Europe  
Gilbert, Sir Martin: Atlas of the Arab-Israeli Conflict  
Gilbert, Sir Martin: Israel: A History  
Glazov, Jamie: United in Hate  
Gordis, Daniel: Saving Israel  
Griffith, Melanie: Londonistan  
Grimes, William: A Prosecutorial Brief Against Israel  
Grossman, David: The Yellow Wind  
Hanson, Victor Davis: The Father of Us All  
Harms, Gregory: The Palestine Israel Conflict  
Herzl, Theodor: The Jewish State  
Hourari, Albert: A History of the Arab Peoples  
Huntington, Thomas: The Clash of Civilizations  
Ibn Khaldun: An Arab Philosophy of History  
Johnson, Paul: A History of the Jews  
Judt, Tony: Israel – The Alternative  
Kaplan, Robert: The Coming Anarchy  
Kennedy, Hugh: The Great Arab Conquests  
Laqueur and Rubin: The Israeli-Arab Reader  
Lewis, Bernard: The Crisis of Islam  
Lewis, Bernard: What Went Wrong?  
Lewis, Bernard: History of the Middle East  
Lewis, Bernard: The Middle East  
Lozowick, Yaacov: Right to Exist  
Mearsheimer and Walt: The Israel Lobby  
Meir, Golda: My Life  
Mid East Web: Israel and Palestine: A Brief History  
Morris, Benny: The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem  
Naipaul, VS: Among the Believers  
Orwell, George: Anti-Semitism in Britain  
Phillips, Melanie: Londonistan  
Pipes, Daniel: Miniatures: Views of Islamic & Middle Eastern Politics  
Ricks, Thomas: Fiasco – the American Adventure in Iraq  
Ritter, Scott: Iraq Confidential  
Sachar, Howard: A History of Israel  
Said, Edward: Orientalism  
Shlaim, Avi: The Iron Wall  
Sieff, Martin: Politically Incorrect Guide to the Middle East  
Smith, Lee: The Strong Horse

Spencer, Robert: Islam Unveiled  
Spiro, Ken: World Perfect – The Jewish Impact on Civilization  
Trifkovic, Serge: The Sword of the Prophet  
Uris, Leon: The Haj  
Waldo: Future Jihad: The Euro-Arab Axis  
Wallach, Janet: Desert Queen: A Life of Gertrude Bell  
West, Bing: The Strongest Tribe

#### ART AND CIVILIZATION

Bjelajac, David: American Art, a Cultural History  
Hunter, Sam, et al: Modern Art  
Perry, Gill et al: Themes in Contemporary Art  
Saatchi, Charles: My Name is Charles Saatchi, and I'm an Artoholic  
Tate Modern; Handbook  
Thompson, Don: The \$12 million Stuffed Shark  
Thornton, Sarah: Seven Days in the Art World