

# National Institute for Global Strategy CASS - Chinese Academy of Social Sciences NIGS

International Forum on  
*China's 70-Year Development and the  
Construction of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind*

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Openness, Cooperation and Civilization Dialogue

by

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Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is our duty to thank for this timely event to our Forum host, the State Council Information Office of the P.R. China, and the organizer, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences for their perfect organization and warm hospitality.

Dear Friends,

As we see from the theme and titles of our Forum, we understand that our hosts search for answers to their internal and global challenges ahead as they evolve into a new age of global leadership.

Within this search, I would emphasize two striking points. First is the waning global legitimacy of the USA, and whether China has the capacity to succeed it. The second is an internal challenge, a challenge not only for China but the whole world, that of urbanization of world populations.

Let us start with a quote from Napoleon Bonaparte

"China is a sleeping giant. Let her sleep, for when she wakes she will move the world."

And a second one:

Ibn Khaldoun's analogy: States are like humans; born, grow, mature and die. Today the Western Civilization curved its zenith, and China is climbing up.

And a third one from Sam Huntington

"...The most prominent form of this cooperation is the Confucian-Islamic connection that has emerged to challenge Western interests, values and power."

And the last one by Andre Vltchek  
"New Silk Road is the flagship of the Chinese internationalism."

Dear friends,

My first message to this august group is, "**Legitimacy in the Global Village**".

Why I think this concept is so vital is that, we are leaving behind "**The Age of American Global Legitimacy**" which lasted just 56 years from *September 2 1945 to September 11, 2001*". A very short time fragment of human history.

Since legitimacy is the sine qua non of leadership, which emerging powers are the candidates for a new global legitimacy? To fill the vacuum the USA is leaving behind with accelerating speed?

In the game of international legitimacy, first you are confident that peoples **love you**. Second phase, peoples do not love you anymore; you say they should **respect** you. And finally.. They don't even respect me, and then they should **fear** me. This is the last phase of global legitimacy. President Trump's recent threats of obliteration of Iran and of Turkish economy are some good examples of this trend. *"... if Turkey does anything that I, in my great and unmatched wisdom, consider to be off limits, I will totally destroy and obliterate the Economy of Turkey (I've done before!). They must, with Europe and others, watch over..."*

Let this be our ice-breaker today ☺

Dear Friends,

China may say it does not want to replace the USA as a global leader. It does not boast of a "Shining city upon a hill", "Manifest destiny", "White man's burden" or "Mission civilisatrice".

Yet economic clout brings military clout which in turn brings political clout. It is not easy for China to return to its historical isolationism in our global village. It cannot escape a mission for a better, just world.

Historically, balance of power means equilibrium, and any new candidate which forces its way up among the powers, rocks equilibrium which may lead to Tucidides trap and end in catastrophes of titanic scale. At this point, we would be asking a further question: Should

humanity fear the annihilating potential of rising powers, or declining powers? Just as human beings, if a state feels strong and beautiful, it is self-confident, it may be benevolent. Yet if it feels weak and ugly, it may do ugly things.

And global legitimacy and leadership depend on a powerful civilization. China has one indeed. A very strong characteristic of a civilization is its ability to be **“imitated”**. Today, we talk of a world youth with American baseball hats, sneakers, American music, Hollywood movies etc. What is the lifestyle of China that the global village is thirsty for? Longing to imitate? Would the world leave English and use Chinese language as lingua franca?

Further.. The most important issue for the Western World is their materialist, consuming **“lifestyle”**. They are so zealous on keeping it. Not only them. Westernized youth of the world too. Even youth in Afghanistan, Iran and Arab countries! And indeed in my country Turkey.

So here comes the question:

How much Westernized are we?

From waking up, back to bed, in between, how much of our daily lifestyle reflects our traditional culture, how much reflects modern Western culture?

Which Western utilities can we discard?

Forget Western suite and necktie, can we ask our kids to discard American baseball hats?

Can we prohibit Western web games, music or movies?

Impossible.

Chinese Civilization indeed is a very different Civilization than Abrahamic Civilizations. In the age of communication, what lifestyle, arts and values would it offer to the world? One very crucial factor for the loss of American global legitimacy was the exposure by IT the blatant, unashamed lies and manipulations of its politicians and mainstream media working as war machine. In the age of IT, can China offer the global community a more honest and ethical media forum?

Civilizations by nature, are prone to exposure, are not afraid of receiving foreign cultural impacts to enrich themselves, they digest, synthesize them, then radiate them back to their regions and the world. Throughout history, civilizations have traded with each other, some merged into each other, some were a continuation of each other i.e. Ottoman Civilization as a synthesis of and continuation of Persian, Arabic and Byzantine Civilizations.

Since China is the rising power of the Global Village, we try to figure out the possible behaviour of this closed box. As global behaviour patterns of Christian and Islamic Civilizations in history and modernity are easier to predict, China’s especially recent history makes it a mystery box for its mission of global leadership. I think our Chinese friends also seek answers to these questions.

American **lifestyle** seems it shall keep its throne for a long time to come. Yet, as decline of American political legitimacy is accelerating, the new global generation is expecting a new world, philosophy of which is based not on might, but, as Turkish President Erdogan insists, **justice**. Can the global community trust in China for such leadership?

One important shortcoming with the USA was that it acted exclusively with Europe and Israel as its partners. Its ears were open only to Europe and Israel. Perhaps that is why its legitimacy declined much sooner than it would have survived.

One wonders if China, rather than excluding the **“rest”**, can partner with “all civilizations” for a shared future for mankind. Sam Huntington says China would cooperate with Muslims who for him “has bloody borders”...

Is China preparing a convincing philosophy to fix the problems of declining Western materialist capitalist Civilization for a new global civilization? What strategy does China have for realizing it? Can we make an estimation of the balance of realpolitik vs. ideal politic in future Chinese world dream?

China is such a mystery that it is not even in the radar of the game of legitimacy yet. As I said in the beginning, age of American legitimacy lasted just about half a Century. Looking at its operations of **“Bringing Democracy”**, we see millions in destruction, human catastrophe and suffering in Viet Nam, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Palestine, etc. We do see, in French coinage, a **failed “hyperpower”** with the greatest annihilating power of human history. A country we fear its President is not in control of its civil and military servants... A serious defect for American democracy and a concern for mankind.

Dear Friends,

Now urbanization and universal secular education.

There are speculations of a United Nations with 250 member states by the year 2050. How does China plan to cope with the accelerating winds of decentralization and micronationalism?

Add to this the estimates that about 80% of global population will live in cities by the year 2050. As the German saying goes, "stadtluft macht frei" "city air liberates". It is easy to oppress and suppress insulated village peasants. Yet city people are more educated, more individualistic, not submissive, and revolt easier.

Secular education shall further foster materialism as metropolitan people shift from the millennial “tradition and religion based ethics and values” (Marx’s opium), to secular, materialist bourgeois ethics in metropolises.

Given global injustices, in a near future, metropolises will face riots in global scale. Today we see harbingers in Paris, Barcelona, Santiago, Caracas, Hong Kong, Athens, Beirut, and Rome etc. Arab countries are especially prone to serious uprisings. And China, as its peasants flock to cities, has to prepare for such challenges.

With skyrocketing injustice and capital concentrating in fewer hands, massive unemployments coming, I am afraid of a trend **Western democracies moving into authoritarian regimes rather than authoritarians going towards liberal democracy**. A bleak future for young generations.

Together with the winds of micronationalism and decentralization, the rather young concept of “Nation State” may not survive our century leaving its place to few trillion dollar companies evolving into a totalitarian elite ruling decentralized micro-clans in a futuristic world of Aldous Huxley or George Orwell.

Dear Friends,

After such lengthy introduction, now lets us take our themes one by one:

Our first theme is “OPENNESS”.

As our hosts are asking the question of the “Construction of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind”, with the word “shared”, they give us the message that they do not want to close in and act alone, but want to open to the global community.

Here I would like to come back to media. What I observed through my diplomatic career was the timid psychology of journalists from poor countries functioning in Western countries and the arrogant demeanor of Western journalists in poor countries, feeling the aggressive support of their governments giving them immunity much beyond that of ambassadors. So long as this psychological atmosphere of inequality and injustice goes, we cannot speak of global press freedom and openness.

And since we shall be talking of “Global Community”, the first to come to mind are the terms “Global Village” and “Globalization”. And the magic word for globalization is “**communication**”. Soon, every single human being on our planet shall be connected with all others at the speed of light. Can we stop it? Should we stop it?

And many a youth with exhibitionist impulses are wide open to each other on social media. How about Governments and trillion dollar companies? With new processors a million times faster than the present ones.. How much secrecy?

If the world generations are being **educated in secular, materialist, uniform philosophy**, eagerly assuming a new global lifestyle, not forgetting that technology forces individuals to

common habits (i.e. smartphone use), then may it mean they are heading to a uniform, common global "identity"?

Hence I see three important factors of materialist world philosophy for new generations of the global village. Namely; secular education, metropolitan lifestyle with consumption, and IT.

Here the grand question is: Remembering Ray Kurzweil, would IT lead the global community into **singularity** further merging all civilizations and lifestyles into a uniform one under the rule of a global elite?

Dear friends,

As openness is the fate, now let us see if we can have DIALOGUE.

Civilizations mainly based on religion, many a time boasting of absolute truth, they did clash with each other. And today.. Against the views of Huntington and the like, I do not see a future clash of civilizations. Why? The philosophy of Secular **Education**. By consensus, Global Secular education is uniting the global youth under the flag of **materialism**. This means a materialist world approach, leaving millennia old spiritual education behind. We may see clashes, yes, but not civilizational ones. Of materialist interests.

With IT, it is grassroots dialogue today. Youth is already in global engagement. They started as warriors, sporting their fierce animal reflexes on line. Regulations do not seem to work. One wonders if things can mature and good-will dominates. Or else, social media may lead to internal and international chaos.

Classically, when we speak about Dialogue among Civilizations, many understand it as a dialogue among religious or political leaderships. Yet, without the grassroots participation of simple crowds, NGO's, social media, international organizations etc., dialogue among leaders would lead to nowhere.

Based on Austrian philosopher Hans Köchler's coinage and Iranian president Mohammad Khatami's initiative, the United Nations proclaimed the year 2001 as the "UN Year of Dialogue among Civilizations".

Another initiative, the Alliance of Civilizations was proposed in 2005 by the Spanish Prime Minister, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero and co-sponsored by the then Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Yet all civilizations see themselves supreme. And Western Civilization now tired, is it ready to meet other civilizations at an equal standing? For a dialogue of equals? Philosophy and historical practice of Islamic and of the Ottoman Civilization was "Co-survival in Harmony"

without annihilating or assimilating other religions and civilizations. Can we do more in 21<sup>st</sup> Century?

We need empathy. Have nots of the world are trying to get West's ear to listen to their concerns. And mission of the Western media, the dominant media in the global village, is not the harmony of civilizations, ethics, nor justice, but continuation of the dominance of Western interests in the global village.

What is the remedy? Social Media. For the new generations, social media is gradually overcoming the established media representing governments and capitalist interests. The establishment will have a natural tendency to limit this new phenomenon of social media.

And this brings us to the last question, that of COOPERATION among civilizations.

As we said, every civilization is an open, receptive system, a continual synthesis of colorful inputs. Yet every civilization sees itself supreme. Especially taking the profound effect of religions on civilizations, it is not easy for them to give concessions to each other.

Remember the recent effort for dialogue among religions. Prompt reaction was; religions were the true words of God, there cannot be any concessions among them, yet the dialogue could be called dialogue among the believers of religions for a harmonious co-habitation.

Cooperation does not necessarily mean a joint effort of the equals. Rather... It may be among un-equals. Is our global village ready for a just relationship among the powerful and the weak? As a grayed, retired diplomat, I cannot be optimistic from what I have seen and experienced in my lifetime.

Yet IT is changing the religion based civilization, bringing forth practical, actual, materialist "**lifestyle**" rather than the philosophical approach to life. And a natural evolution into singularity does not necessitate cooperation anyway.

Speaking of cooperation, I would also ask whether Western Civilization is universal or not. It seems universal. Yet it has defects and shortcomings too. Then rather than being reactive to it, can we study and keep the positive parts of it for a future synthesis of our global civilization? In fact, it would be a natural process rather than social engineering.

Looking back at human history, pendulum went back and forth between **matter and soul**. With Western Reform, Renaissance and Industrial Revolution, matter was the victor. Would shortcomings, especially the injustices of the materialist philosophy kick the pendulum to a global spiritual civilization?

No clear answers. Things may move in a natural process rather than social engineering.

Still yet, the question is; would IT break the natural evolution of humanity...

If so... In a technologically manipulated synthetic future, what is the use of discussing civilizations, global leadership and cooperation, anyway?

Then... would there be need for a new nation state as a global leader?

Thank you for your patience.