

Waiting for the end of the world

By Pepe Escobar

*We were waiting for the end of the world
Waiting for the end of the world, waiting for the end of the world
Dear Lord, I sincerely hope You're coming
'Cause You really started something*

Elvis Costello, *Waiting for the End of the World*, 1977

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We cannot even begin to fathom the non-stop ripple effects deriving from the 2023 geopolitical earthquake that shook the world: Putin and Xi, in Moscow, de facto signalling the beginning of the end of Pax Americana.

This has been the ultimate anathema for rarified Anglo-American hegemonic elites for over a century: a signed, sealed, comprehensive strategic partnership of two peer competitors, intertwining a massive manufacturing base and pre-eminence in supply of natural resources – with value-added Russian state of the art weaponry and diplomatic nous.

From the point of view of these elites, whose Plan A was always a debased version of the Roman Empire's Divide and Rule, this was never supposed to happen. In fact, blinded by hubris, they never saw it coming. Historically, this does not even qualify as a remix of the Tournament of Shadows; it's more like Tawdry Empire Left in the Shade, "foaming at the mouth" (copyright Maria Zakharova).

Xi and Putin, with one Sun Tzu move, immobilized Orientalism, Euro-centrism, Exceptionalism and, last but not least, Neo-Colonialism. No wonder the Global South was riveted by what developed in Moscow.

Adding insult to injury, we have China, the world's largest economy by far when measured by purchasing power parity (PPP), as well as the largest exporter. And we have Russia, an economy that by PPP is equivalent or even larger than Germany's – with the added advantages of being the world's largest energy exporter and not forced to de-industrialize.

Together, in synch, they are focused on creating the necessary conditions to bypass the US dollar.

Cue to one of President Putin's crucial one-liners: "We are in favour of using the Chinese yuan for settlements between Russia and the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America."

A key consequence of this geopolitical and geo-economic alliance, carefully designed throughout the past few years, is already in play: the emergence of a possible triad in terms of global trade relations and, in many aspects, a Global Trade War.

Eurasia is being led – and largely organized - by the Russia-China partnership. China will also play a key role across the Global South, but India may also become quite influential, agglutinating what would be a Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) on steroids. And then there is the former “indispensable nation” ruling over the EU vassals and the Anglo-sphere rounded up in the Five Eyes.

What the Chinese really want

The Hegemon, under its self-concocted “rules-based international order”, essentially never did diplomacy. Divide and Rule, by definition, precludes diplomacy. Now their version of “diplomacy” has degenerated even further into crude insults by an array of US, EU and UK’s intellectually challenged and frankly moronic functionaries.

It’s no wonder that a true gentleman, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has been forced to admit, "Russia is no longer a partner of the EU... The European Union 'lost' Russia. But the Union itself is to blame. After all, EU member states... openly declare that Russia should be dealt a strategic defeat. That is why we consider the EU to be an enemy organization."

And yet the new Russian foreign policy concept, announced by Putin on March 31st, makes it quite clear: Russia does not consider itself an “enemy of the West” and does not seek isolation.

The problem is there’s virtually no adult to talk to on the other side, rather a bunch of hyenas. That has led Lavrov to once again stress that “symmetrical and asymmetrical” measures may be used against those involved in “hostile” actions against Moscow.

When it comes to Exceptionalistan, that’s self-evident: the US is designated by Moscow as the prime anti-Russia instigator, and the collective West’s overall policy is described as “a new type of Hybrid War.”

Yet what really matters for Moscow are the positives further on down the road: non-stop Eurasia integration; closer ties with “friendly global centers” China and India; increased help to Africa; more strategic cooperation with Latin America and the Caribbean, the lands of Islam – Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt - and ASEAN.

And that brings us to something essential that was – predictably - ignored en masse by Western media: the Boao Forum for Asia, which took place nearly simultaneously with the announcement of Russia’s new foreign policy concept.

The Boao Forum, started in early 2001, still in the pre-9/11 era, has been modeled on Davos, but it's Top China through and through, with the secretariat based in Beijing. Boao is in Hainan province, one of the islands of the Gulf of Tonkin and today a tourist paradise.

One of the key sessions of this year's forum was on development and security, chaired by former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who is currently Boao's president.

There were quite a few references to Xi's Global Development Initiative as well as the Global Security Initiative – which by the way was launched at Boao in 2022.

The problem is these two initiatives are directly linked to the UN's concept of peace and security and the extremely dodgy Agenda 2030 on "sustainable development" – which is not exactly about development and much less "sustainable": it's a Davos uber-corporate concoction. The UN for its part is basically a hostage of Washington's whims. Beijing, for the moment, plays along.

Premier Li Qiang was more specific. Stressing the trademark concept of "community of shared future for mankind" as the basis for peace and development, he linked peaceful coexistence with the "Spirit of Bandung" – in direct continuity with the emergence of NAM in 1955: that should be the "Asian Way" of mutual respect and building consensus – in opposition to "the indiscriminate use of unilateral sanctions and long-reaching jurisdiction", and the refusal of "a new Cold War".

And that led Li Qiang to the emphasis on the Chinese drive to deepen the RCEP East Asian trade deal, and also advance the negotiations on the free trade agreement between China and ASEAN. And all that integrated with the new expansion of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), in contrast to trade protectionism.

So for the Chinese what matters, intertwined with business, is cultural interactions; inclusivity; mutual trust; and a stern refusal of "clash of civilizations" and ideological confrontation.

As much as Moscow easily subscribes to all of the above – and in fact practices it via diplomatic finesse – Washington is terrified by how compelling is this Chinese narrative for the whole Global South. After all, Exceptionalistan's only offer in the market of ideas is unilateral domination; Divide an Rule; and "you're with us or against us". And in the latter case you will be sanctioned, harassed, bombed and/or regime-changed.

Is it 1848 all over again?

Meanwhile, in vassal territories, a possibility arises of a revival of 1848, when a big revolutionary wave hit all over Europe. In 1848 these were liberal

revolutions; today we have essentially popular anti-liberal (and anti-war) revolutions – from farmers in the Netherlands and Belgium to unreconstructed populists in Italy and Left and Right populists combined in France. It may be too early to consider this a European Spring. Yet what's certain in several latitudes is that average European citizens feel increasingly inclined to shed the yoke of Neoliberal Technocracy and its dictatorship of Capital and Surveillance. Not to mention NATO warmongering. As virtually all European media is technocrat-controlled people won't see this discussion in the MSM. Yet there's a feeling in the air this may be heralding a Chinese-style end of a dynasty. In the Chinese calendar this is how it always goes: their historical-societal clock always runs with periods of between 200 and 400 years per dynasty.

There are indeed intimations that Europe may be witnessing a rebirth. The period of upheaval will be long and arduous - due to the hordes of anarco-liberals who are such useful idiots for the Western oligarchy - or it could all come to a head in a single day. The target is quite clear: the death of Neoliberal Technocracy.

That's how the Xi-Putin view could make inroads across the collective West: show that this ersatz "modernity" (which incorporates rabid cancel culture) is essentially void compared to traditional, deeply rooted cultural values – be it Confucianism, Taoism or Eastern Orthodoxy. The Chinese and Russian concepts of civilization-state are much more appealing than they appear.

Well, the (cultural) revolution won't be televised; but it may work its charms via countless Telegram channels. France, infatuated with rebellion throughout its history, may well be jump to the vanguard – again.

Yet nothing will change if the global financial casino is not subverted. Russia taught the world a lesson: it was preparing itself, in silence, for a long-term Total War. So much so that its calibrated counterpunch turned the Financial War upside down – completely destabilizing the casino. China, meanwhile, is re-balancing, and is on the way to be also prepared for Total War, hybrid and otherwise.

The **inestimable Michael Hudson**, fresh from his latest book, *The Collapse of Antiquity*, where he deftly analyzes the role of debt in Greece And Rome, the roots of Western civilization, succinctly explains our current state of play:

"America has pulled a colour revolution at the top, in Germany, Holland, England, and France, essentially, where the foreign policy of Europe is not representing their own economic interests (...) America simply said, - We are committed to support a war of (what they call) democracy (by which they mean oligarchy, including the Nazism of Ukraine) against autocracy (...) Autocracy is any country strong enough to prevent the emergence of a creditor oligarchy, like China has prevented the creditor oligarchy."

So "creditor oligarchy", in fact, can be explained as the toxic intersection between globalist wet dreams of total control and militarized Full Spectrum Dominance.

The difference now is that Russia and China are showing to the Global South that what American strategists had in store for them – you're going to "freeze in the dark" if you deviate from what we say – is no longer applicable. Most of the Global South is now in open geo-economic revolt.

Globalist neoliberal totalitarianism of course won't disappear under a sand storm. At least not yet. There's still a maelstrom of toxicity ahead: suspension of constitutional rights; Orwellian propaganda; goon squads; censorship; cancel culture; ideological conformity; irrational curbs of freedom of movement; hatred and even persecution of – Slav – Untermenschen; segregation; criminalization of dissent; book burnings, show trials; fake arrest mandates by the kangaroo ICC; ISIS-style terror.

But the most important vector is that both China and Russia, each exhibiting their own complex particularities – and both dismissed by the West as unassimilable Others - are heavily invested in building workable economic models that are not connected, in several degrees, to the Western financial casino and/or supply chain networks.

And that's what's driving the Exceptionalists berserk - even more berserk than they already are.