

Why the West Is *in* Decline

BY NORMAN A. BAILEY

With no alternative empire to carry the torch forward.

Almost exactly one hundred years ago, Oswald Spengler published his masterpiece, *The Decline of the West*. He was not wrong, just a bit premature. Western civilization survived fascism, Nazism, and Soviet communism at a huge cost in lives and wealth. By 1991, the political scientist Francis Fukuyama was able to proclaim that history was at an end, with the final triumph of political democracy and the market economy.

The end of history lasted all of ten years, expiring with the planes which crashed into the twin towers in Manhattan and the Pentagon. Now, twenty-four years later, Western civilization is under extreme threat, both internally and externally.

The internal threat, consisting of the drastic weakening in almost all of the Western world of belief in the twin pillars of Western civilization, namely Judeo-Christian morality and Greco-Roman civil society, is undoubtedly the single most important of the threats, as masterfully documented in the film *America's Burning*, directed by our esteemed founder and publisher, David Smick.

For all its many flaws and failings, Western civilization is very much worth saving. Never in history have so many benefited from the blessings brought by this world view. From its genesis, around 500 BCE, to its apogee in the Roman Empire of the third and fourth centuries CE, the Western civilizational paradigm was triumphant. Then the empire began to decay from within until its final collapse in the Western half of the empire in 476 CE.

This collapse was taken advantage of by the barbarians of the time: Huns, Goths, Vandals, Franks, Saxons and others, who invaded and plundered and plunged the entire region into what became known as the Dark Ages.

The Western civilizational paradigm was carried on in the eastern part of the empire from its capital in Constantinople. The East Roman (Byzantine) Empire kept the torch of Western

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civilization lit for a thousand years, through Arab and Crusader invasions, finally to succumb to the Ottoman Turks in the mid-fifteenth century.

By that time, the torch had been passed back to the resurgent West, in a continuous rise from the fifteenth to the twenty-first century, with the paradigm again dominant in Europe and eventually in much of the rest of the world. One after another, European states carried the Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman theological/philosophical ideology around the world, first to Portugal, then Spain, France, and Great Britain, which passed the torch on to its former colony, the United States, in the twentieth century. The United States then dominated the entire geopolitical/economic/social world from the collapse of the Soviet Union until the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

But just as with the Romans at the height of their splendor, U.S. domestic cohesion around the philosophy which had brought them to where they were began to weaken, aided and abetted by the new set of barbarians.

EXTERNAL THREATS

In order of importance, the external enemies of Western civilization are Russia, Iran and its proxies, and China and its satellite North Korea.

Russia. Russia is a country of continental size with abundant natural resources, a huge inventory of nuclear weapons, and the means to deliver them. At the same time, it is the least of the major threats to the West because of a rapidly declining population and an endless, self-inflicted war with Ukraine which is wreaking immense damage to the country whatever the final outcome.

Iran and its proxies, Islamic jihadism. Iran poses a significant ideological threat to the West because of its dominant position as sponsor of Islamic jihadism throughout the Arab world. It also has the capability of producing nuclear weapons and already has the means of delivery. Contrary to what some believe, Islam is not in the Western paradigm, but this is a subject for another essay. Weaknesses include the fact that the Iranian theological dictatorship is very unpopular among its own people, and it faces an implacable enemy in the strongest military power in the Middle East, Israel. Hezbollah's defeat by Israel and the overthrow of the Assad regime in Syria have seriously degraded Iran's strategic position in the Middle East. This, added to the Trump re-election and the regime's domestic unpopularity, will force the Iranian government to concentrate its attention and resources on protecting itself instead of on regional and international operations.

China and its surrogate, North Korea. China is in itself a very ancient civilization which has been in decline since the seventeenth century, and which is now resurgent, with a carapace of Marxism fused onto it and a large inventory of nuclear weapons. It is now challenging the West with an

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extremely well-designed and executed grand strategy including all the elements of statecraft: diplomacy, public diplomacy, economic measures, subversion, and military measures, all executed with technological brilliance.

It can also make use of its nuclear-armed subsidiary, North Korea, to perform tasks it doesn't want to do itself for strategic or tactical reasons, such as threaten South Korea and Japan and aid Russia in its war with Ukraine.

WESTERN RESPONSE TO THE NEW "AXIS OF EVIL"

In brief, the Western response has been inadequate to counterproductive. The West has performed best (or perhaps we should say "least badly") in the case of Russia with an active NATO-led response to the Ukraine invasion, and worst in the case of Iran, where certain U.S. administrations have actually been courting our most vicious enemy. In the case of China, Western policy has been a mish-mash of backing and forthing with no coherence whatsoever.

The result of all of this, coupled with internal rot, is that, in a word, the West is losing the contest, with no "East Roman Empire" to carry the torch forward.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE? (APOLOGIES TO LENIN)

With reference to Russia, support the regime's internal and external enemies with a view to toppling the government and replacing it with a non-threatening one.

In Iran, strike at the head of the octopus instead of its tentacles, by supporting the Iranian people in overthrowing their oppressive theological dictatorship. Stop and reverse the policy of appeasement which has dominated Western and particularly U.S. policy towards Iran in recent years.

With reference to China, study how it is operating its interconnected elements of grand strategy and formulate and execute our own grand strategy in response. The grand strategy formulated and executed by the Reagan administration in the face of the Soviet threat needs to be replicated now *vis-à-vis* China. Support South Korea and Japan in their confrontation with North Korea, including helping them if they decide to develop a nuclear capacity.

None of the above will happen unless the internal enemies of Western civilization in Europe and the United States are confronted and defeated. America (and Europe) is indeed burning, and the fire must be extinguished. ♦