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1 – THE NEXT DECADE: GEORGE FRIEDMAN

The next ten years will be a time of massive transition. The wars in the Islamic world will be subsiding, and terrorism will become something we learn to live with. China will be encountering its crisis. We will be moving from a time when financial crises dominate the world to a time when labor shortages will begin to dominate. Over longer periods inexorable trends work their will, but in this immediate future, leadership will count for a great deal.

In *The Next Decade: Where We've Been...and Where We're Going*, George Friedman offers a prognosis for the immediate future framed by two concepts. The first is the idea that the United States is an unintended empire of vast power, deeply interlocked with the affairs of most of the world. It is not a question of whether Americans want this empire; it is impossible to let go. The issue of the next decade is how to manage the unintended and unwanted consequences of empire.

The second concept is what Friedman calls the Machiavellian Presidency. He considers three presidents exemplary: Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt and Reagan. Each possessed a deep moral core. Each fully understood the uses of power, lying, and violating the Constitution and human rights to achieve moral necessities: the abolition of slavery (Lincoln), the destruction of Nazi Germany and

Imperial Japan (Roosevelt), and the destruction of the Soviet Union (Reagan).

The United States has stumbled into empire. It now faces the crisis of Rome: that the empire will annihilate the republic. Friedman argues that of all the institutions of our Constitution, only the Presidency can preserve the republic while managing the empire. He also argues that the greatest threat to the republic is living in denial about what the United States has become.

EXCERPT

“An unsentimental foreign policy means that in the coming decade, the president must identify with a clear and cold eye the most dangerous enemies, then create coalitions to manage them. This unsentimental approach means breaking free of the entire Cold War system of alliances and institutions, including NATO, the International Monetary Fund, and the United Nations. These Cold War relics are all insufficiently flexible to deal with the diversity of today's world, which redefined itself in 1991, making the old institutions obsolete. Some may have continuing value, but only in the context of new institutions that must emerge. These need to be regional, serving the strategic interests of the United States.”

2 – CIVILIZATION: NIALL FERGUSON

The rise to global predominance of Western civilization is the single most important historical phenomenon of the past five hundred years. All

over the world, an astonishing proportion of people now work for Western-style companies, study at Western-style universities, vote for Western-

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style governments, take Western medicines, wear Western clothes, and even work Western hours. In *Civilization: The West and the Rest*, Niall Ferguson explains how this came to be.

Beginning in the fifteenth century, the West developed six powerful concepts that the Rest lacked:

1. Competition (decentralization of political and economic life)
2. Science (understanding the world through the scientific method of observation and measurement)
3. Property rights (rule of law to protect individuals as owners)
4. Medicine (a branch of science that allowed major improvements in health and life expectancy)
5. The consumer society (a mode of material living)
6. The work ethic (a moral framework and mode of activity derived from Protestant Christianity)

To use the language of today's computerized, synchronized world, writes Ferguson, these were the six killer applications – the killer apps – that

allowed a minority of mankind originating on the western edge of Eurasia to dominate the world for the better part of 500 years.

The critical point is that the differential between the West and the Rest was institutional.

Yet now, argues Ferguson, the days of Western predominance are numbered. Why so? Because the Rest are adopting the six crucial concepts while the West has literally lost faith in itself.

EXCERPT

“At its core, a civilization is the texts that are taught in its schools, learned by its students and recollected in times of tribulation. ... But what are the foundational texts of Western civilization, that can bolster our belief in the almost limitless power of the free individual human being? And how good are we at teaching them, given our educational theorists' aversion to formal knowledge and rote learning? Maybe the real threat is posed not by the rise of China, Islam or CO2 emissions, but in our own loss of faith in the civilization we inherited from our ancestors.”

3 – HOW CIVILIZATIONS DIE: DAVID GOLDMAN

Thanks to collapsing birthrates, much of Europe is on a path of willed self-extinction. The untold story is that birthrates in Muslim nations are declining faster than anywhere else. Europe, even in its decline, may have the resources to support an aging population, if at a terrible economic and cultural cost. But in the impoverished Islamic world, an aging population means a civilization on the brink of total collapse – something Islamic terrorists know and fear.

Muslim decline poses new threats to America, writes David Goldman in *How Civilizations Die (And Why Islam Is Dying Too)*. How should the US deal with Muslim decline? With a hard hand, in the case of Iran. Demographic decline tells the

ayatollahs that their window of opportunity is closing. Deterrence worked with a nuclear-armed Russia. It won't work with the apocalyptic Shi'ite leadership of Iran. As a practical matter, Goldman believes, we must stop Iran from getting nuclear weapons, no matter how great the cost.

EXCERPT

“Population decline is the elephant in the world's living room. As a matter of arithmetic, we know that the social life of most developed countries will break down within two generations.

“Nor is the problem limited to the industrial nations. Fertility is falling at even faster rates – indeed, at rates never before registered anywhere

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– in the Muslim world. For the first time in history, the birth rate of the whole developed world is well below replacement, and a significant part of it has passed the demographic point of no return. But Islamic society is even more fragile. By the middle of this century, the belt of Muslim countries from Morocco to Iran will become as gray as depopulat-

ing Europe. The Islamic world will have the same proportion of dependent elderly as the industrial countries. A time bomb that cannot be defused is ticking in the Muslim world. Imminent population collapse makes radical Islam more dangerous as nations confronting their own mortality may choose to go down in a blaze of glory.”

4 – SUICIDE OF A SUPERPOWER: PATRICK J. BUCHANAN

America is being transformed into a multiracial, multicultural, multilingual, multiethnic stew of a nation that has no successful precedent in the history of the world. So writes Patrick Buchanan in *Suicide of a Superpower: Will America Survive to 2025?*

America is no longer truly a nation, “a people of a common ancestry, culture, and language who worship the same God, revere the same heroes, cherish the same history, celebrate the same holidays, and share the same music, poetry, art, literature.” Buchanan lays out his case in 11 chapters.

EXCERPT

1. The Passing of a Superpower (“We have accepted today the existence in perpetuity of a permanent underclass of scores of millions who cannot cope and must be carried by society – fed, clothed, housed, tutored, medicated at taxpayer’s expense their entire lives.”)
2. The Death of Christian America
3. The Crisis of Catholicism
4. The End of White America

5. Demographic Winter
6. Equality or Freedom? (“Where equality is enthroned, freedom is extinguished. The rise of the egalitarian society means the death of the free society.”)
7. The Diversity Cult
8. The Triumph of Tribalism (“We may deny the existence of ethnonationalism, detest it, condemn it. But this creator and destroyer of empires and nations is a force infinitely more powerful than globalism, for it engages the heart. Men will die for it. Religion, race, culture and tribe are the four horsemen of the coming apocalypse.”)
9. “The White Party”
10. The Long Retreat
11. The Last Chance (“We are trying to create a nation that has never before existed, of all the races, tribes, cultures and creeds of Earth, where all are equal. In this utopian drive for the perfect society of our dreams we are killing the real country we inherited – the best and greatest country on earth.”)

5 – THROW THEM ALL OUT: PETER SCHWEIZER

One of the biggest scandals in American politics is waiting to explode: the full story of how the permanent political class enriches itself at the expense of the rest of us. Insider trading is

illegal on Wall Street, yet it is routine among members of Congress. Normal individuals cannot get in on IPOs at the asking price, but politicians do so routinely. The Obama admin-

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istration has been able to funnel hundreds of millions of dollars to its supporters, ensuring yet more campaign donations. An entire class of investors now makes all of its profits based on influence and access in Washington. So writes Peter Schweizer in *Throw Them All Out: How Politicians and Their Friends Get Rich Off Insider Stock Tips, Land Deals, and Cronyism That Would Send the Rest of Us to Prison*.

EXCERPT

“Welcome to the outrageous arrogance of crony capitalism in Washington. Not only are members of Congress able to act on information that is not available to the rest of us, but they are able to put their own fortunes at risk when they ought to be concerned only with the public interest.

“Members of Congress are privy to all sorts of inside information about pending government actions. Some of it comes from their actual actions – that is, passing legislation. Some of it comes as a result of their position of power. Legislators are told things by regulators or bureaucrats in private because they ask about them.

“While a committee’s public hearings are generally about stage-craft, very frank and detailed conversations often take place behind closed doors. The most valuable information is revealed in private meetings, phone calls, and correspondence. If members of Congress buy and trade stock based on that information, or if they pass that information along to a campaign contributor or their own financial advisers, they are not considered guilty of any wrongdoing. Yes, this is an outrageous standard. But remember, they write their own rules.”

6 – YOUR TEACHER SAID WHAT?!: JOE KERNEN AND BLAKE KERNEN

Joe Kernen is a father who discovered his ten-year-old daughter Blake was being exposed to anti-capitalist messages all day every day, in school and in the media (in both the programming and the advertisements). So he embarks on a Socratic dialogue with her to teach the value of capitalism. The result of that dialogue is *Your Teacher Said What?! Defending Our Kids From the Liberal Assault on Capitalism*.

As an unapologetic cheerleader for the free enterprise system, Joe teaches Blake that it is not only the world’s greatest engine for prosperity, but also essential for human freedom, and learns a thing or two himself.

EXCERPT

“It started with asking Blake to start writing down words and phrases she heard but didn’t understand about the economy, politics, and so on. Some of Blake’s questions led me to discover ideas I didn’t know about already, like the Higgs effect: the way

that governments manage to turn temporary crises into permanent programs. ...

“If you’re anything like me, I can guarantee that your jaw will drop the same way mine did once I started paying attention to the hostility to free-market capitalism that infects almost every movie and television show your kids are watching. ...

“Blake didn’t always agree with me. One thing I learned is that the most powerful way in which nine- or ten-year-olds resemble grown-up Progressives is in their love of regulating things. ...

“(T)he time that Blake and I have been embarked on this father-and-daughter exercise has taught me that educating a child in the way free markets are supposed to work (and, most of the time, the way they actually do work) has never been harder ... or more rewarding.”

*Wishing you and yours Happy Holidays
and a Good New Year.*