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# **The Myths and Realities of the Clash of Western and Chinese Civilizations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

## **The Globalization and Comparative Approach**

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**Key Words: Western Civilization, Chinese Civilization, USA, EU, China, civilization clash, wealth bifurcation, Death Triangle of Civilization, globalization, globalization waves, economic crisis, grand strategy, outsourcing, wise civilization, civilization future.**

### **Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

The main purpose of this investigation is to evaluate a question: is there a clash between the Western and Chinese civilizations, and what is the myth and reality of this clash? The spectacular economic development of the Chinese and the concurrent decline of Western civilization provoke many predictions of the near-future world order. So far it seems that the West cooperates with China quite well, since through outsourcing of Western manufacturing, China can employ its large labor force and the Western financial elite benefit tremendously in business, due to cheap labor. However, the question is how long can that kind of cooperation last? It triggered the financial crisis of 2008-2011, due to the shrinking middle class in the West, and furthermore, increasing numbers of employed Chinese workers can buy more and will need to consume more strategic resources which are available in limited volumes on the earth.

Will the current cooperation be replaced by a clash for resources? That kind of question will be investigated in this paper. Also the wisdom-oriented abilities of both civilizations will be evaluated to see which one has better chances to survive a shortage of strategic resources.

The methodology of this investigation is based on the interdisciplinary big-picture view of the world scene, driven by a global economy and civilization, with an attempt to compare both civilizations according to key criteria. A set of conclusions will be provided at the end of this paper, with practical and social implications for eventual implementation.

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<sup>1</sup> The author is grateful to Professors Han, Rienzo and Tarn from Western Michigan University (USA) for providing suggestions on how to improve this investigation.

## **The Impact of Globalization on Western and Chinese Civilizations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The development of the modern world began after the fall of Byzantium (1453) and the discovery of America (1492), that is, at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In each century since, usually one country has dominated the world. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century Portugal dominated, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Spain was the hegemon, and in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Great Britain was the leader. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the hegemon was France, which was later replaced by Great Britain. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century Great Britain, Germany, the United States, and to a certain degree Russia competed for the main role in world politics. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the U.S.'s domination is fading, and many predict it will be replaced by China.

In the last 500 years, different targets and issues were at stake in world politics. For example, Portugal, Spain, and Great Britain were conquering new territories, with good results. Once the world became richer in the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to the gains of the Industrial Revolution, at stake were clashing ideologies. The English Revolution (1688-89) built the foundation for the parliamentary system, the American Revolution (1775-1783) provided the concept of modern democracy, and the French Revolution (1789-1799) created citizenship in France.

The Industrial Revolution (1760-1850-1960) contributed the factory system and industrially manufactured products, financed by capital. It led to accelerated wealth creation and rising inequality among society's members. To solve rising dissatisfaction and poverty, differing ideologies regarding the further development of civilization were at stake. None of those ideologies—capitalism, socialism, and later communism and Nazism—could solve societal problems. Eventually these ideologies led to the Bolshevik Revolution (1917), Spanish Revolution (1936), World War II, the Cold War (1945-1991), and to the very successful Scientific-Technological Revolution (1945-) and Information Revolution (1980-).

After the fall of communism and the end of the Cold War (1989-1991) in Europe, the Information Revolution accelerated its activities in Western civilization, triggering the fourth Globalization Wave.<sup>2</sup> Very soon this revolution embraced the whole world. Its effect has been the development of the global economy, controlled by global financiers. The latter developed global corporations which are outsourcing manufacturing to Asia, particularly to China, where the cost of labor is low and the market is the largest in the world.

Supposedly, “what is good for the global corporations” is good for their maternal countries. With the help of lobbyists, global corporations control governments in

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<sup>2</sup> The first Globalization Wave (GW I) took place at the end of the 15th century (Discovery of America), GW II in 1837 (British Empire), GW III in 1945, GW IV in 1990.

Western civilization, which supports outsourcing its own industrial base, since this leads to better business that can create more jobs. This is true; however, those jobs are created outside of Western civilization. The economic crisis in 2008-2011 in the U.S. and the E.U. proves that turbo-capitalism led to the decline of Western civilization and the rise of China. Now Chinese civilization (China and diaspora) is awakening, full of energy to collect the benefits of the West's mistakes. Furthermore, Chinese civilization does not want to fully Westernize (however the young generation is more open to Westernization) since it appreciates its own values and principles that have developed over the last 5000 years.

In 2011, the Chinese economy took second place in the World, after the American and before the Japanese and German economies.<sup>3</sup> This supports arguments made by many authors and politicians that China will move to first place, before the U.S., in the second part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. According to the Economist,<sup>4</sup> in 2011 the GDP of the U.S. was still two times bigger than China's (in market prices) and only 25 percent bigger in basket prices (ppp). If the current rate of economic development continues, China's economy will reach the same level as the U.S. in 2016 (ppp) and 2018 (market).

The Chinese economy looks even better if it is compared in certain categories to that of the U.S. For example, in 2011 in production of steel, China was producing 6.6 times more than the U.S. The production of goods was 1.1 times bigger, the sale of cars was 1.2 times bigger, export was 1.3 times bigger, 3.3 times more mobile phones were in use, investments were 1.4 times bigger, and energy consumption was 1.1 times bigger. These data should not mislead, since they are the result of the West's strategy to move production to China! If the American economy is two times bigger and the population is one fourth as great, the GDP per capita is still eight times bigger in the U.S. This is the subject of many negative comments about China. However, consumption in China should rise and could reach the American level by 2033.<sup>5</sup>

This type of forecasting is just a simple extrapolation of data, which can lead to erroneous conclusions. If what such a prognosis maintains would actually happen, it would imply that the world has limitless strategic resources and Western civilization is not able to self-correct its strategies. Since the reservoir of strategic resources is limited, the current spectacular development of Chinese civilization will bring the world civilization to an end sooner or later. Eventually, China could apply its wisdom and go back the Great Wall, as it did in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when the Emperor ordered that the Chinese fleet be destroyed (1433).

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<sup>3</sup> Nominal GDP list of countries for the year 2010. World Economic Outlook Database September 2011, International Monetary Fund. Accessed on September 26, 2011.

<sup>4</sup> December 31, 2011, p. 61.

<sup>5</sup> China's Economic Heartland: Chongqing. <http://www.theglobalist.com/countryoftheweek/sample.htm> (retrieved 1-2-2012).

We can contemplate whether the Chinese civilization has an expansive character or whether that is a myth, since China's expansion was triggered by the West. Will China cleverly stay within its secure territory? Or, contrary to its history, can China change its character and promote not only economic but also cultural and even military expansion far beyond its borders?

The question is, if the West takes back its outsourced jobs, will China be able to continue its current, spectacular development?

## **Can China Transform from Robot to Master of Manufacturing and Be an Economic Superpower?**

Most of our impressions about China's super economic power to a certain degree are myth.

China became the world's factory when the Internet eliminated the problem of distance. It became evident that outsourcing manufacturing wouldn't be so difficult since e-communication speeds up business. In addition, it could be cheaper and sometimes faster due to the Chinese ability to work hard and on time. In the past China did not design products or technological processes, invest in the production infrastructure, or even provide marketing for products it manufactured. Furthermore, Westerners taught Chinese workers how to work on given products in given manufacturing settings.

In such a way China became a "robot"<sup>6</sup> of Western civilization and is not an independent economic superpower. At least not yet. It is a myth, not reality, that China became such a strong economy due to its own internal ability. On the other hand, the Chinese are a very talented people, who learn fast from the West and sooner or later they will be able to develop their own products and manufacturing facilities. But it is less evident that they will also be able to be successful enough in developing marketing and selling to compete with the Americans and Europeans. First of all, the Chinese do not copy (as the Japanese used to do) foreign solutions, because they co-own them, usually in the range of 50%, through venture-oriented undertakings. Also, they have the ability to absorb (comprehend) foreign solutions, due to China's culture of leaving "room" in its Mindsphere.

In the past, a common stereotype was that the Chinese traditionally lack scientific and technological ability, despite the fact that somehow they stumbled upon paper making, printing, gunpowder, and the mariner's compass. Modern Chinese themselves are

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<sup>6</sup> For example, the Chinese labor working for Apple in Foxconn City lives in company barracks and work 6 days per week and 12 hours per shift, making \$17 per day. Foxconn employs nearly 300 guards to direct foot traffic so workers are not crushed in doorway bottlenecks. (The New York Times, January 22, 2012, p. 22). No wonder that the American workers cannot compete with the Asian ones. In order to do so the former should return to the working conditions of the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century to satisfy the appetite of the global corporations 200 years later. Is it progress?

sometimes surprised to realize that modern agriculture, shipping, astronomical observatories, decimal mathematics, paper money, umbrellas, wheelbarrows, multi-stage rockets, brandy and whiskey, the game of chess, and much more, all came from China. The sciences of astronomy, physics, chemistry, meteorology, seismology, technology, engineering, and mathematics can trace their early origins to China.

From 600 AD until 1500 AD, China was the world's most technologically advanced society. China was the leading maritime power in the years 1405-1433, when Chinese shipbuilders began to build massive oceangoing junks.<sup>7</sup> Between 1405 and 1433, the emperor of that time (the Yongle Emperor) sent Zheng He out on a series of seven naval expeditions, all designed to control trade and impress other nations (in Africa and India) with the power of the Chinese fleet. The successor emperor (the Hongxi Emperor) promptly cancelled Zheng He's expeditions and proceeded to have much of the Chinese fleet burned or destroyed (in 1433) and went into isolation.<sup>8</sup>

Thus ended China's period as the world's greatest naval power. The interesting thing is that under the Hongxi Emperor and his son, the Xuande Emperor, many reforms were put in place that proved to be very popular amongst the people and which led to what is often referred to as one of China's golden ages. "Where would China be now had they not 'pulled back' from their maritime explorations and had they continued to spread their influence out amongst the world? That's not to take anything away from where China is at the moment, but it's interesting to ponder whether or not things would have been different," (Stanley Bronstein on July 7, 2009).<sup>9</sup>

Today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Chinese are gaining self-confidence, knowledge, and skills and are awakening from the "opium" which was used by the British to colonize this talented people in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This can be proved by the following facts. In 2011 the Chinese built the fastest computer in the world: Tianhe-1A (built at the National Supercomputing Center in Tianjin, China, with a performance at 2.6 petaflop/s).<sup>10</sup> Their accelerated program of technological development culminated in Yang Liwei's successful 2003 flight aboard Shenzhou 5. This achievement made China the third country to independently send humans into space. Future plans include a permanent space station and crewed expeditions to the Moon and Mars.

All this indicates that China has the ability to surpass the "robot" stage and to become a developer of science, technology, and production. In 2011 China patented 1.1 times more solutions than the U.S.<sup>11</sup> This means that the Chinese are developing their own

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.basicrps.com/chine/histoire/china.htm> (retrieved on 1-10-2012)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/watkins/treasurefleets.htm> (retrieved on 1-2-2012).

<sup>9</sup> <http://stanleybronstein.com/china-was-once-the-worlds-greatest-naval-power-but/> (retrieved on 1-2-2012).

<sup>10</sup> 1 petaflop/sec=10<sup>15</sup> floating-point operations per second, or = 1,000 trillion operations/sec. In comparison, a hand held calculator makes about 10 oper/s.

<sup>11</sup> The Economist, December 31, 2011, p. 61.

intellectual potential, thus leading China to independence from the West. China also has a huge internal market to support its own production, if the West slows down importing. In such a way, China is en route to becoming a real economic superpower, particularly if Western civilization continues the suicidal de-industrialization and liquidation of the middle class. If this trend goes on, Western civilization will continue to provide the marketing and selling for China. On the other hand, it is rather doubtful whether China will accept payment in governmental bonds which will never be paid off.

The paradigm of China as a “robot” brings to attention Isaac Asimov’s First Law of Robotics (1942): “A robot may not injure a human or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.” It is very evident that the West is pushing the Chinese robot to harm the master. It is no wonder that Western civilization is declining so rapidly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is not China’s fault but rather the West’s lack of wisdom.

The question is whether or not such an economically strong China will try to convert the Global civilization into a Global-Chinese civilization (Glob-Chin Civilization)? Nowadays, China is installing 150 Confucius Institutes in the U.S. which will train future teachers of the Chinese language at American schools. Is this a long-term strategy of globalization *a la* China?

### **Can the West Surrender Manufacturing and Live on Borrowing?**

The depth of the economic crisis in 2008-2011 indicates that it is not a classic cyclical recession but rather a new structural crisis. The majority of specialists and politicians agree with respect to the scope and depth of this crisis. But can none of them define a convincing diagnosis of this crisis?

In the U.S. a leading opinion is that this crisis was caused by easy credit (mortgages) for houses and an expanding federal government deficit. In Europe, a leading opinion is that the deficit of European governments using *euro* is so large that it cannot be paid off. In other words, those countries are in a practical sense bankrupt. As a result of these causes, Western civilization has entered a deep structural crisis. The solution recommended by top European leaders for how to get out of this crisis is to pay off debts. In practice, one must take out more loans to service the old loans. It is a suicidal strategy.

To increase the supply of money in the marketplace, one must increase the amount of money in the hands of consumers by employment. In effect those consumers will go to stores and buy goods which must be produced in higher volumes. However, this production will be increased in Asia, particularly in China, and local consumers (in the U.S. and Europe) won’t be engaged in production and won’t gain income through employment. The service economy in the U.S. and E.U. is too weak (since is based on low-paying jobs) to generate more money in the hands of consumers.

The presented diagnosis is simple and obvious. However, none of the important economists, politicians, and publicists has even mentioned the presented diagnosis and solution because the manufacturing lobby spends many millions of dollars to control the “mouths” of leading opinion-makers. So far those in the so-called “Top 1%” make very good money in China, where the labor costs are still low. In effect, the U.S. is deep in pending debts. For example, the federal government is \$15 trillion in debt, local governments \$5T, individuals \$16T, and the accumulative deficit of the foreign exchange is \$4.6T, totaling about \$40.6T.<sup>12</sup>

This constitutes about 70 percent of the world GDP. In order to pay off the debts of 310 million American consumers, about 2.45 billion workers must work for a whole year.<sup>13</sup> Of course this is not feasible. The U.S. cannot pay off its debts; it can only take new loans to pay the annual interest of old loans. The same strategy is applied by the E.U. in countries using the *euro*.

In 2011 the politicians of Western civilization, whose society is steered by the global financiers, refused to regulate the global economy, because obviously, the present state of the global economy is beneficial for global corporations. On the other hand, those who are negatively impacted, the “99%,” launched the “Occupy Wall Street” movement aiming against those “1%” who collect the enormous profits from outsourcing manufacturing to Asia and economically colonizing workers over there. This movement will continue to exist and grow, since the reasons for the crisis will not be removed soon.

From a logical point of view, Western civilization should regulate (through WTO, IMF, WB, G7, and national governments) its activities in the global economy to survive in a very broad, sustainable sense. Perhaps this issue will come out during the late stages of the 2012 presidential election campaign in the U.S, but up until now, nothing indicates that this will happen. There is no correct diagnosis of the crisis or political will to elaborate such a diagnosis and implement the obvious solution in practice.

The correct strategy is to bring back outsourced jobs and re-industrialize the West again. To do so one must implement tax credits<sup>14</sup> to support insourcing for American products which used to be made abroad and imported to the U.S. Another issue is who should finance the safety net for those American workers whose jobs have been off shore outsourced, regardless of possible tax credits? Perhaps those corporations which make huge profit on it or just the society? But to avoid any form of protectionism and to support free trade, tariffs for products made by particular countries, such as China, Germany, Japan, France, and so forth, should be minimal, because the theory of free

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.usdebtclock.org/> (Retrieved on 1-10-2012)

<sup>13</sup> It is assumed that 50% of populations belong to the labor force ( $7 B \times 0.5 \times 0.75 = 2.45 B$ ).

<sup>14</sup> On January 24, 2012 President Obama suggested this kind of credit in his State of the Union.

trade is not built upon the necessary transfer of industrial jobs from the developed to developing countries.

This strategy is simple and natural, but due to the conflicting interests and pressure from elites in the world, it is not implementable today. One must remember that “innovation does not happen in laboratories by researchers. It happens on the factory floor. The process of making stuff helps you experiment and produce new products. If everything is made in China, people there will gain the skills, knowledge and experience to innovate. And the Westerners will be behind.”<sup>15</sup>

### **China’s “Hidden” Culture: A Key to Understanding Its Economic Transformation<sup>16</sup>**

Westerners look at the Chinese from the Western point of view, neglecting the 5000 year-long phenomenon of this very long-lasting nation. It may not be appropriate to equate China’s economic accomplishment to that of Western civilization. Until about 30 years ago, Chinese civilization had not progressed much over the past 200 years. Its economic accomplishment in the past 30 years is simply a duplication of that of Western civilization (clothing, social behavioral changes, material consumption, etc.). However, the Chinese do have a deeply-rooted “hidden” culture which is not well understood by Westerners. Our writings are primarily focused on the “economic impacts” and “changes” due to the globalization and outsourcing caused by the availability of Internet. They cannot fully explain the intrinsic differences between Chinese people and those in the West. Following are a few culture-wide factors which shall be addressed to emphasize the ability of the Chinese culture to pursue its role in world economics:

- a. Strong family values. Most Chinese people prefer not to reveal individual political interests until the whole society has a big problem. In other words, they can tolerate “less democracy” for more national stability, and this is the reason they accept “modified” communism without going against the communist leaders.
- b. Hoarding of wealth. Similar to the Japanese, Chinese people do not spend all the money they earn. They care about holding long-term property such as land and gold, which makes their economy less sensitive to the outside world. I.e., the global crisis has less effect on the internal economy in China since most people manage their finances very well, even though they do not have the same life quality or living standards as the West.
- c. Emphasis on education. Most parents will put education as the first priority for their children. In other words, they can let go of personal life quality or enjoyment if there is opportunity to upgrade their social status (or position) and

<sup>15</sup> F. Zaharia. The Case for Making It in the USA. *TIME*, February 6, 2012, p. 19.

<sup>16</sup> This section is based on Professor Bernard Han’s advice to this author, who is grateful to him for so honestly sharing his knowledge about the hidden Chinese culture.

knowledge. The Chinese value knowledge and social status more than anything else. They consider merchants the worst class in society. This is the big difference between the East and the West.

In fact, the above three factors are commonly shared by the Jewish culture. This could be the reason that Jews were assimilated by the Chinese 1200 years ago.<sup>17</sup> It also explains why the Chinese are as successful as Jews in commerce and education in the U.S. and beyond.

Most people in China understand that their political system is not good, but they keep silent since the Communist party is lopsided and there is no way to avoid persecution if you go against the system. But, if the Chinese government continues to allow more economic freedom or make improvements in living standards for the general public, then there will be no “Problem of Revolution” at all. Nevertheless, we cannot underestimate the potential danger embedded in these two factors since the Chinese leaders have to be willing to let go some of their given advantages, curb their corruptions, and maintain a pseudo-democracy to be considered as partners with Westerners.

According to the Chinese understanding of the 2008-2011 deep economic recession, its roots are not in outsourcing of Western jobs but come from the following factors:

- a. Capitalists’ selfishness. Most rich people (1%) do not care about others (99%) but only about their own benefits. This is very true in the United States and possibly true in the E.U.
- b. Overemphasized individual rights. Everyone is equal, and this can be applied to people with different value systems, different religions, different life styles, and different morality. No wonder there are no standards of living in the society. Everyone is equal and it turns out everyone is great and everyone is equally distracted and confused.
- c. The inability to conduct self-examination. As shown in Table 1, the poorest country in the whole world is India (not China). However, both India and China are really poor compared to the Western countries. Using the figures presented in Table 1, the U.S. owns 23 times more wealth per person compared to China, and 52 times more wealth per person than in India. All these numbers indicate that one of the real problems in the West is overspending and over-enjoyment of personal life.

If the previous factors do not change, the hope for self-correction in the West is very slim.

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<sup>17</sup> see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaifeng\\_Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaifeng_Jews)

The Chinese collaborate with Westerners from the position of a wiser partner who has patience and hope to gain power step by step.

### **Do We Face a Contest for Supremacy or for Civilizational Survival?**

A China that has been resurrected by globalization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has become the subject of fascination for intellectuals from the West. They are in a race to publish the most impressive book. Just a few examples illustrate this race: *A Contest for Supremacy, China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery In Asia*, by Aaron L. Friedberg (2011), *China Shakes the World*, by James Kynge (2006), *China on the Brink*, by Callum Henderson (1999), *When China Rules the World*, by Martin Jacques (2009), and *The Quest*, by Daniel Yergin (2011), among others. In these titles there is more myth than reality.

The West has always had well-defined enemies. In particular, the U.S. has always known which country is its enemy. The first enemy was Great Britain, later Germany and Japan, followed by USSR (until 1991). Today the enemy is China. This is an unintended enemy which was created because it is convenient for the U.S. to have an enemy besides terrorists.

China should be a good enemy since it is not a democracy, just ruled by a communistic party in an authoritarian manner (Walter and Howie, 2011). However, China does not want to propagate communism elsewhere. Contrary to the communistic dogmas, this country has been implementing a managed-market economy (a new type of capitalism<sup>18</sup> or a modified communism or socialism), which energizes individuals at the bottom of the hierarchical society. On the other hand, this system as the *Chinese model* has an inherited conflict between communism and capitalism. Furthermore, China does not want a war with the West, since it is winning without fighting because it is successfully following the main rule of its great sage Sun Tzu (544-496 B.C.). However, “an increasingly powerful China is likely to try to push the U.S. out of Asia, much the way the U.S. pushed European powers out of the Western Hemisphere,” (Mearsheimer 2001).

However, an aircraft carrier, the Shi Lang, (which was purchased as the Varyag, a Kuznetsov-class carrier from Ukraine, refurbished, and is in service) is intended to show

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<sup>18</sup> China, in terms of its economic systems, “makes 3 steps forward and 2 steps backward.” In fact Chinese leadership is afraid of dividing the country into two parts; those who “have” and those who “do not have.” In 2011-2012 China is “crack-downing on capitalism” (R. Foroohar, *The Curious Capitalist. TIME*, January 16, 2012, p.22). The government has intensified Internet controls, jailed a few intellectuals, and limited free speech and human rights in order to prevent a potential Chinese Spring or Summer. When Deng Xiaoping restored his authority in 1978 and said that “to be wealthy is not a sin,” the Chinese economy began growing; it flourished. Many officials use this new policy to make unexpected and huge profits. The state monopolies have fallen into the hands of small groups of party apparatchiks who maintain the political status quo for their own sake.

the world that China is a first-class naval power. Apparently, China is changing its strategic thinking, which was concentrated on crossing the sea to do battle on land, to looking to encircle Taiwan by adroitly deploying forces off Taiwan's east coast. In theory, a Chinese carrier-led naval task force could be used to deny the U.S. the ability to come to Taiwan's rescue<sup>19</sup>. The integration of Taiwan with mainland China is considered by China as an "internal issue."

Because Western civilization is intensively supporting its own development by transformation to a Global civilization, China has only to comply with this push and continue its own unprecedented development. According to popular estimations, China's economy should reach the level of the American economy in 2027, but it will be two times bigger in 2050 (Jacques, 2009). The question is, won't such a China that feels so strong want to disseminate its "winning" culture around the world? This author thinks as follows: If this becomes true, it will mean that China has abandoned its famous "middle of the road" politics. It will also mean that China will have entered a period when it will be risking what it has gained so far in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century and what it could not achieve in the last 500 years.

The most important question is -- will China be a superpower? Will there be a civilizational clash? The answer is reflected in the following "ifs"<sup>20</sup>:

- a. If the Chinese leaders do not deal with corruption or maintain actual political stability, then China will never have a chance to become a superpower.
- b. If, ironically, the U.S. helps (or even pushes) China to successfully become a country with a full democracy, then China will definitely become the leading superpower, given nothing changing in the United States and European Union.
- c. If China Westernizes, then there will be no clash of "civilization" at all. Rather, there will be conflicts of interests.

The current Western approach to China follows step b, since the West thinks that it is the "best" and that every nation/state/civilization should Westernize. In this manner, the West is bringing up the future superpower, which will be its strategic competitor or perhaps even an enemy. Despite the wise opposition of Chinese seniors to Westernization, the younger generation and the huge Chinese diaspora are Westernizing quickly. A good proof of this is the decline of Chinatowns in the United States, which in the past were the hubs of Chinese culture and today are almost empty.

It is obvious that the development of Chinese civilization according to Western patterns sooner or later will lead to a shaking up of the balance of interests rather than to the hegemony of China in the global economy. We are already entering into this state of the

<sup>19</sup> See "China's 65,000-ton secret." *Bloomberg Businessweek*. January 30-February 5, 2012, p. 65.

<sup>20</sup> These "ifs" were suggested by Professor Bernard Han, who consulted this author on the Chinese culture.

world civilization, because it is impossible to maintain the current rate of civilizational development for a population of 7-11 billion people. But such a number of potential customers is a dream of global corporations, which perceive good business lying ahead.

Therefore we face not the race for who will rule the world, but in reality we deal with the race for who will have the best access to the largest sources of energy and other strategic resources which are necessary to maintain our civilization in good shape. In this area, China has shown many initiatives and has successfully gained access to sources of oil in Africa, South America, and the Near East.

For example, in 2011 China signed contracts to import 65 percent of the world's reserves of iron ore and 40 percent of copper and aluminum. To secure these supplies, China operates mines from Zambia to Peru, extracts crude oil in Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, and Sudan, and invests in the extraction of natural gas in Australia and Turkey. China even invests in the extraction of coal in North America, since Chinese coal is of low quality. China is the largest importer of soybeans and also corn, which is needed for the rising consumption of meat.<sup>21</sup>

China was self-sufficient in its consumption of oil in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, China became the second largest consumer of oil after the U.S. By about 2020, China may surpass the U.S. in consuming oil (Yergin, 2011:192). China has 170 cities with populations of one million and several cities with populations of ten million. The rising urbanization of China requires energy. To maintain good social order, China should create 25 million jobs every year.

Today, the economic powers race for access to strategic resources. The most important strategic resource is oil. The question is, will such an expanding global economy lead to a war between the U.S. and China?

## **From China's Rise to the Troubled Future of Civilization**

### **China and the Business Growth Trap**

The nonsense of the strategy of continuous economic growth is illustrated in Table 1, which compares the U.S. China, India, and the rest of the world's growth at the rate of the so-called "American Way of Life" in 2011. If the Chinese and Indians would like to live as the Americans do, then the world resources consumed would need to be 309 percent larger than are available now, even assuming that the rest of the world would be satisfied with the same material standards of living as they currently have.

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<sup>21</sup> China's Buy List, *TIME*, January 9, 2012, p. 46-47.

**Table 1. What Will Happen if China and India Grow as the U.S. Has?**

COUNTRIES	Population (millions) 2011	% of World Resources Used 2011	American Way of Life - % of Resources Used 2011
USA	312	27	27
China	1,348	5	117
India	1,204	2	99
The Rest	4,136	66	66
Total	7,000	100	309

Source: Pocket World in Figures, *The Economist*, 2011, official centers and the Author's estimations

This comparison's conclusion can be supported by the analysis done by Lester Brown (2001:17) who noticed that:

- If the Chinese would like to eat as much beef as the Americans, then they will need 343 million tons of grain a year, an amount equal to the entire U.S. grain harvest.
- If the Chinese would like to eat as much fish as the Japanese, then they will need to consume 100 million tons of seafood – the entire world fish catch.
- If the Chinese would like to have two cars per household as the Americans do, then they would need 80 million barrels of oil per day, which is about 80 percent of the world production in 2011. Needless to say, the bigger size of parking lots would take 50 percent of the 31 million hectares currently used to produce the country's 132-million-ton harvest of rice, which is the basic food of these people.
- If the Chinese are to be more educated, then the consumption of paper would rise from 35 to 342 kilograms/per person (similar to the Americans), and they would need more paper than the world currently produces.

The business growth trap is very obvious in light of the provided examples. Its threat is very well seen in the big-picture perspective. Unfortunately, current business practices are oriented in small-picture perspectives. Also, political control of business is limited to a very short cycle, which neglects the decline of civilization on the small planet called Earth.

In 1972, an MIT research team led by Dennis Meadows published a book, *Limits to Growth*, predicting that growth on this planet will stop within the next one hundred years. They invoked five major trends of global concern: accelerating industrialization, rapid population growth, widespread malnutrition, depletion of nonrenewable resources,

and a deteriorating environment. In the years following the publication of this book, people began to recycle wasted resources and thought more about sustainable growth. After the subsequent 36 years, a sixth trend of global concern must be added: unregulated turbo-capitalism (global economy), which threatens the well-being of Western civilization.

### **The Race for Resources and the Death Triangle of Civilization**

“The race between population and resources leads to two related problems, the rate at which resources are being used (and used up), and the inequality in the distribution of resources,” (Cameron, 1993:404). The first threat can and perhaps will stop civilization sooner or later. The second threat will lead to internal and external wars of civilizations, which eventually will result in a more aggressive civilization at the expense of other civilizations.

Seen from space, Earth exhibits a striking difference from the other planets of the solar system: more than two-thirds of its surface is covered with water. Earth is the only planet in the solar system known to support life. Unlike the other planets, its crust is broken into plates that are in constant motion, borne along by currents of heat below. The Earth has a magnetic field generated by this heat, which is one of the sources of energy which drives civilization. The Earth is among four of the smallest planets in the Solar System. Its resources are finite.

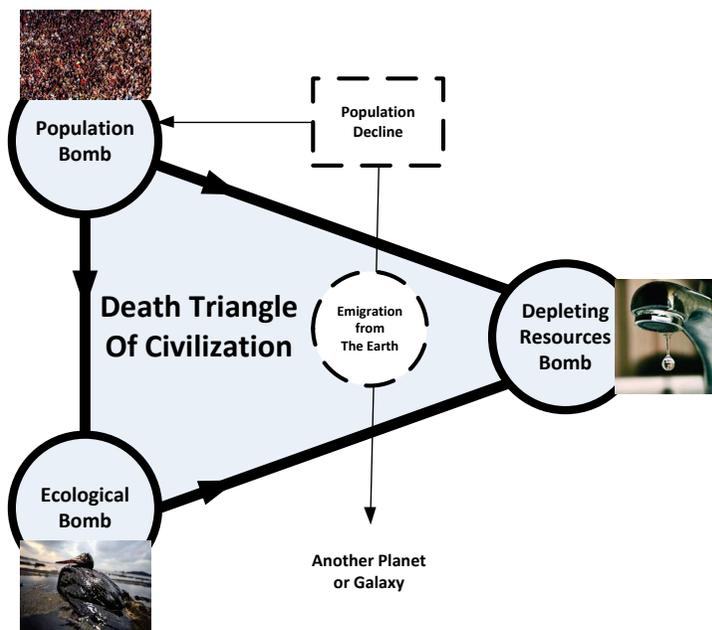
From 4000 B.C. through 1800 A.D., our civilization grew three percent per 1,000 years, and the budgeting of strategic resources was not an issue (Maddison, 2001). Since the Industrial Revolution in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, civilization has been in accelerated growth and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it has entered the “growth trap” period. The growth trap is when accelerated growth is intensified by the growth of population and managerial/global turbo-capitalism, which looks for tremendous growth in executive benefits and replaces voters with lobbyists.

We used to think and act in terms of a local community, nation, region, or even a group of nations. But now we need to consider the broader – planetary – context if we want to sustain our social life. The planet is so large in relation to every individual but for the population it is becoming smaller and smaller. In the last 200 years the population has grown from 300 million to seven billion and is still growing. We have about 4.7 acres of available footprint but we use 5.4 acres in terms of calculated resources. “We are living beyond our ecological means. The planet is shrinking, because we are running out of resources. We are using the planet with such intensity that it is unable to restore itself,” (Steffen, 2008:16).

In terms of the two most important strategic resources of civilization, water and energy, the situation is as follows:

- **Water** – Over 97 percent of the Earth’s water is in the oceans and has too much salt for the use of most land plants and animals. Of the 2.5 percent that is fresh water, about two-thirds is locked up in glaciers. This means that slightly less than one percent of the Earth’s water is fresh and in liquid form. Irrigation systems are drying up the deltas of such major rivers as the Indus, Nile, Colorado, and some rivers in Europe. The U.N. set a goal to provide 13 gallons of safe water per day (within a few hundred meters of each family) to eight billion people in 2025. This goal is unrealistic, taking into account that according to the World Health Organization, the minimum need is five gallons of treated water a day per person, and it is difficult to provide this amount of water to everybody (Conkin, 2007:66).
- **Energy** – How long will our fossil fuels like oil, gas, and uranium last? Oil reserves should last about 40 years; gas, 51 years; uranium, 30-70 years; and coal, 200 years. Therefore, humans’ knowledge and skills must replace these nonrenewable resources with ones that are either man-made (e.g., ethanol) or not subject to depletion (e.g., solar and wind energy). Otherwise, civilization will stop (Targowski, 2009:398).

There are many more threats to civilization, presented in Figure 1, which connects three dangerous bombs: the Population Bomb, the Ecological Bomb, and the Strategic Resources Depletion Bomb (Targowski, 2009:404).



**Figure 1. The Death Triangle of Civilization**

The Death Triangle of Civilization will be controlling the global economy sooner than will China, supposedly the largest economic power in 2050, because the rise of China only accelerates the activation of that Triangle. In effect the whole world will enter such a complex, practically suicidal, situation that nobody will be able to manage it.

## Can Western Knowledge Win Over Chinese Wisdom?

The present situation in the world civilization is not yet a confrontation between the Western and Chinese civilizations because the West still treats China as its “robot.” It plans to utilize the cheap Chinese labor force as long as possible and to make a good profit. However, China is slowly getting out from under that subordination and beginning to surpass its master.

The Western civilization represented by the “1%” with the highest income recalls the last phase of Rome (476 A.D.), which dominated the world for nearly 1200 years. Similarly Western civilization dominated the world for nearly 1200 years since the rise of the Frankish Empire (800 A.D.). Table 2 compares the state of Rome I with the U.S. (Rome III).

**Table 2. The Comparison of the Roman Empire and the U.S. in Times of Crisis**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>The Roman Empire 5<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.</b>	<b>The United States The 2000s A.D.</b>
Rulers	Insensitive	Misleading
Politicians	Irrelevant	Self-serving
Elite	Passive	Detached
Military	Dispersed	Stretched-out
Work done by	Slaves & Servants	Computers Illegal immigrants working like slaves Offshore cheap labor
Ideas	Lack of ideas	Lack of ideas
Purpose of life	<i>Dolce vita</i>	The fun society
Mindset	Return to countryside and autarchy	Protectionist feelings and besieged
Viewed by others	Falling & attacked and beaten by weaker forces	Falling (Iraq & Afghanistan) & attacked by terrorists against whom one cannot decisively win

The comparison of Rome I and Rome III (the U.S.) gives the impression that the U.S. is in bad shape from the civilization point of view. It cannot lead Western civilization back to its previous prominent state.

The West is sure of its ability to create and disseminate knowledge, since it has been doing so very spectacularly for the last 500 years. In the Encyclopedia Britannica about 85 percent of the entries are about contributions made by Western civilization. Ricardo Duchesne in his book *The Uniqueness of Western Civilization* (2011) asks: what makes the West unique? He explains it is partly the singular emergence of democratic culture, including the capacity for self-criticism from which revisionism itself derives. It is partly the rationalization of so many spheres of life, from science to law. It is partly the culture of innovation and widespread competition. These are all classical explanations for the divergence of the West.

What Duchesne adds is an emphasis on the "continuous creativity," as he calls it, of the West, and the argument that the creativity of Western civilization derives from a longstanding matrix of aristocratic libertarianism. Another unique feature of Europeans was a relatively egalitarian (actually egalitarian-aristocratic) spirit. A king in Europe was usually a first among equals, at least among the aristocrats; at the very least no member of the nobility or aristocracy had to kowtow or prostrate themselves before a king. This is quite in contrast to despotic cultures almost anywhere else in the world. While some other warrior aristocracies (most notably Japan) had a similar "noblesse oblige" ethos, the egalitarianism was missing.

Of all these factors, the Western civilization lost the ability for self-correction by its elites, thus creating very strong economic inequality. Consequently, these two factors triggered the collapse of democratic values and the foundation of civil society. Such a society, while knowledgeable, cannot make good judgments and choices, which used to define its wisdom. Western civilization developed the belief that knowledge and technology can solve any crisis. In many cases this worked in the past. But when 9-11 billion people populate the Earth in 2050 and would like to live at the level of Westerners at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, neither knowledge nor technology will solve the coming crisis.

Western society's loss of wisdom cannot compete with China's famous smartness, hard work, and wisdom to survive in very harsh conditions. This is contrary to some expectations that China must Westernize<sup>22</sup> like Japan in order to succeed, or that it will only be successful if it copies the American democratic model. In fact China learned much more from the failure of the Soviet Union and its fall in 1991, after seeing Russia's convulsions when transforming into the Western model.

The Chinese Communist Party saw that the Soviet Union was economically very inflexible at the citizen level. This led to its collapse in 1991. On the other hand, post-

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<sup>22</sup> Chinese intellectual, Nobel Prize winner Liu Xiabo wrote that "I now realize that Western civilization, while it can be useful in reforming China in its present stage, cannot save humanity in an overall sense. I must 1). Use Western civilization as a tool to critique China. 2). Use my own creativity to critique the West." *The New York Review of Books*, February 9, 2012, p. 53.

Soviet Russia lost its grip on the economy and is in permanent turmoil. The lesson learned led China to two main rules: allow economic freedom at the bottom of society and simultaneously keep strong control at the top of the state by an authoritarian government. Perhaps this political system may be called modified communism or socialism. Needless to say, this is the future system of governing, in which the world will distribute limited strategic resources by coupons.

Then a strong government at the top will be required to supervise a life with limited resources. Perhaps it may even return to the level of Russian life under Leninism-Stalinism (1917-56). It will be a corrupt and ineffective system, of course, but people will be happy just to have something to eat and to keep them warm. Due to this system, China, which used to have a less comfortable civilization than the West, will be better off than the West during the time of the Death Triangle of Civilization's threats. Very probably the Chinese model will be adapted by the West so that it may address the coming critical times of the Triangle.

**Table 3. The Comparison of Western and Chinese Civilizations**

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>WESTERN CIVILIZATION</b>	<b>CHINESE CIVILIZATION</b>
State	Nation-states	Civilization-state spread through country and diaspora around the globe
Government	Democracy	Authoritarian Hierarchy
Culture	1200+ years old	5000 years old
Main values	Individualism Neglect of Seniors	Family Respect for Seniors
Hardship threshold	Low	High
Focus	Short and Instant	Long and Patient
Strongest knowledge	Scientific and Universal	Scientific and Conventional
Infrastructure	Complex	Simple and Complex
Interest	Extraverted	Introverted
Level of energy needed to support life activities	High	Low to Medium
Character	Arrogant	Submissive
Survival ability	Moderate	High

**Source: Author's opinion, and Targowski (2009).**

This comparison indicates that in the sense of enduring, Chinese civilization has better characteristics than Western civilization. This is proven by comparing 5000 to 1200 years, which means that the former has lasted four times longer than the latter. It is interesting that while Chinese civilization is still functioning, Western civilization is being transforming into Global civilization. This means that Western civilization is

fading. The West in facing China's challenge does not show any strong vision, strategy, or will to correct its situation.

## **Toward the Wise Civilization and the Remaking of the Modern World in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century we are facing the empirical fact that neither capitalism (particularly liberal and unregulated), nor socialism, nor communism are accomplished systems in the long-term. One must predict that a wise civilization (Targowski, 2011:185) will need a new political system in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that will be called Ecoism (or Eco-Superiority). This means that the ecosystem's long-term sustainability is superior to humankind's well-being in the short-term. This system is based on the following values:

- Eco-Justice, Eco-Freedom, and Eco-democracy  
To steer the development and operations of:
- Complementary Spirituality
- Integrated Society
- Deep Economy (Eco-Economy)
- Deep Communication
- Eco-Infrastructure

The values of Eco-Justice, Eco-Freedom, and Eco-Democracy mean that limits in terms of the well-being of the ecosystem must be given greater weight in traditionally perceived justice, freedom, and democracy. It is like in Deep Economy (Eco-Economy), where full economic cost cannot be limited only to business cost, but must include environmental and social costs as well.

*Eco-Justice* means that any crime and its consequences must also be evaluated from the ecosystem point of view.

*Eco-Freedom* means that humans are free in their choices and movements as long as they do not destroy the ecosystem. For example, deforestation should be forbidden, and the development of megacities should be controlled from an eco-policy point of view.

*Eco-Democracy* means that the balance of power must be preserved through free elections and a free press but that politicians and the press cannot act against the ecosystem, as they do today in the form of lobbyists' hidden support for politicians and the media. Consequently, the ecosystem will be *superior* to humans, who among themselves behave democratically but in facing the ecosystem are subordinate to it.

*Complementary Spirituality* - The level of spirituality and its complexity determines the possibility for a wise civilization. A low level or lack of spirituality in society puts a given civilization at risk. In the world's approximately 100 active major cultures, each

one has its own kind of spirituality. To remove potential, if not certain, conflicts among them, one must find a common ground for them. This can be done by sharing selected values of each civilization and make of a set of complementary spiritual values. This will eventually lead to a Universal civilization as the potential wise civilization.

*Integrated Society* - The society of a wise civilization should be composed of people who are in solidarity with each other and are wise. In the age of globalization, most societies are multi-cultural, wherein each ethnicity has its own agenda and lives in an almost closed environment. To overcome this situation, they have to be able to integrate around a common culture, which will be called a *middle culture*.

*Deep Communication* - Current civilizations are driven by “shallow communication,” particularly in mass media. They are very simplistic in delivering the news, focusing mostly on negative news about current events. The media rarely cover long-term issues with “deep background,” which contains theoretical, global, and universal knowledge/wisdom about discussed issues.

*Eco-Infrastructure* - Contemporary civilizations have developed many supportive infrastructures (Targowski, 2009:15), which determine the well-being of humans. The most eco-driven infrastructures are urban, transportation, and information. The last two infrastructures created the foundation for the development of the Global civilization by the development of global transportation systems and the Internet. The eco-orientation of this infrastructure should be as follows:

- In the scope of the transportation infrastructure for a wise civilization, particularly for its North American part, one must expand metropolitan transit systems and intercity trains to reduce individual use of cars and save energy. The fuel consumption of cars should be regulated, and cars such as Hummers should not be produced.
- In the scope of the information infrastructure for the wise civilization, one must regulate the development of automation, according to the following laws (Targowski, 2009:273):
  - Law I. Do not develop service systems without human presence.
  - Law II. Do not develop service systems which harm society.
  - Law III. Do not develop service systems which endanger the human race.

Law I protects people against passivity; Law II protects society against structured unemployment; Law III protects the human race against bifurcation into two kinds of species.

Another set of laws for automation in manufacturing is provided by Targowski-Mordak (2011):

- Law I. Do not implement high automation technology before you are sure that the same goal cannot be achieved by other means.
- Law II. Do not implement automation technology with the aim to totally eliminate a human presence in a manufacturing process.
- Law III. Do not develop automation which harms society or endangers the human race.

In effect, the Ecoism (Eco-Superiority) political system satisfies all laws and rules of civilizations and adds new ones to expand human knowledge and wisdom, working for the sake of mankind and its environment.

## Conclusions

One can draw the following conclusions:

1. The spectacular development of China in the 21st century has been triggered by Western civilization. It treats this country as its “robot” by economically colonizing its workforce, benefiting from cheap labor. It is a myth that so far China has improved its development through internal factors.
2. China is transforming in the 21st century from “a colonial robot” (low-level labor) into an economic superpower (high-level-labor, following the Japanese paths in the XX century), due to its wise top management, old culture, and increasing intellectual and infrastructural potential which is strengthening its internal developmental. As a result, China could surpass the U.S. in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the size of its economy and eventually may become the hegemon of Asia and even the world. In this respect, China’s ascendance is not a myth. However, if this premise should become a reality, it is assumed that the West will not be able to practice self-correction anymore, as it used to.
3. Today, it is doubtful whether the West can correct its service economy and return to the industrial or mixed economy because the financial elite still make huge profits through the strategy of outsourcing. This will continue until the “99%” movement transforms into a social revolution. This is the reality of Western civilization, which after transforming to the Global civilization has lost its Christian values and work ethics.
4. In the coming 10-15 years, economic cooperation between the West and China will transform into a conflict over strategic resources and particularly for oil. This may even reach a level of military confrontation, probably first *by proxy*. On the other hand, it is a myth that China is planning a military confrontation to establish a world order *a la* China. China will be content with achieving the status of the leader in Asia and the annexation of Taiwan, which is imminent.

It would be a waste of time and resources for the U.S. to try to maintain its leading role in Asia<sup>23</sup>, because due to the shrinking of American financial might, this is impossible. The U.S. should keep its leadership in Europe, the Americas, and the Near East. This is a strategy which differs from the strategy offered by Z. Brzezinski (2012). It is too much for the declining U.S. to be a leader in another, faraway part of the world. Furthermore, competition from a richer and wiser China will be too much for the declining strategic abilities of the U.S., which so far are driven mostly by global corporations.

5. The clash over strategic resources and the well-being of citizens between the Western and Chinese civilizations will trigger the activation of the Death Triangle of Civilization. This is because a huge world population of 7-11 billion people will begin a fight for mere survival *a la* Darwinism. That clash may be very strong, or it may lead to wise cooperation to avoid the death of civilization. The latter is possible, since people usually behave better in a crisis than in good times.

The reality of Western civilization is such that most of its population, particularly its elites, are too well-off and have lost the instinct for wisdom, despite developing rich knowledge.

6. It should be investigated further what is better from the civilizational point of view: to support less efficient Red China or more efficient White China? Which “China” will deplete sooner the strategic resources of our planet?
7. The development of a wise civilization is the only appropriate strategy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is necessary to popularize it in schools, colleges, societies, and politics. It would be good to implement this strategy before our civilization declines too fast and disappears.
8. It is very probable that Western civilization will not outlive the knowledge which it created. Perhaps Chinese civilization will outlive the Triangle since it is better at adapting to adverse conditions.
9. It would not be wrong to learn from the Chinese civilization what its wisdom is and how to use it for the sake of all. Should the West switch from 26 to a more effective 3000-5000 characters-oriented alphabet?

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<sup>23</sup> Some predict that within ten years, three of the world’s five largest economies will be in Asia: China, Japan, and India (Time, January 30, 2012, p. 26). This is only if Western Civilization won’t self-correct its economic strategy and the planet doubles its inventory of strategic resources.

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