

## **ACTION PLAN TO SAVE THE FUTURE**

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### **Introduction**

In his famous 1989 essay, *The End of History?*, Francis Fukuyama argued that “*the final form of human government*” had been achieved. The recent fall of Soviet communism demonstrated - to him at least - that free-market liberal democracy had won - over authoritarian structures, and would establish a sustainable order for human society for the foreseeable future.

I remember being skeptical of this position. (At least he used a question mark.) The breakup of the Soviet Union was extremely positive, but the historical patterns of individual and social behavior, from which dictatorship arises, remained unchanged. If anything, these patterns and their outcomes were being amplified by the impact of new technology.

There has always been racism, conquest, war and genocide. It’s just that we don’t have a written record prior to Mesopotamia and early Egypt. But it’s been there - this is who we are and what we regularly have done (as paleolithic and neolithic weapons evidence), for the entire 200,000 years of the human experience. This behavior was selected, by evolutionary processes. It was *successful*.

It all comes from tribalism. Individually, we are selfish and afraid - we want to *survive*, and these traits inevitably engender the tribe. There is power in numbers, which fact even more than emotional bonds underlies the strength of the family. This then scales to groups, initially webs of interrelated families. Opposing us are other families and groups, and underneath it all is the ideological essence: It’s us versus them. Lastly, with regards to *them*, any behavior at all is justifiable.

The real question is if this will ever change, if new patterns of evolutionary development will emerge. Will we always compete as tribes, and as individuals within tribes, or will we find a way to move beyond group competition to group and individual cooperation?

In the full unpublished version of my book, *Lessons In Democracy*, I argued that government by the people - cooperation - was being chosen by new and unprecedented evolutionary mechanisms. That was its main theme. (Too bad I couldn’t get an agent. I then trimmed the work down to a basic guide, self-published it on the Internet, and to which pro-democracy activists

responded by translating it into five other languages - I am still looking for Arabic-speaking partners.)

We think of evolution as applying only to physical attributes, changes from favorable genetic mutations that are disbursed through breeding, and which changes may also have behavioral consequences. But for what might be termed highly-evolved species, it is clear that physical form not only drives behavior, behavior in turn drives form. And for a few species, humans among them, this further extends to social behavior, not only individual.

The problem of course is that evolution can fail. Right now many species are unable to survive the human impact - our devastation of the natural environment. But they also do not have the ability to evolve to a new form. To change to a new species takes time, and sometimes there just isn't enough.

In any case, the real historical turning point was not the fall of Soviet communism, but World War II. There was the possibility of wholesale change following the signal effort to defeat the Germans and the Japanese. However, mistakes were made. The phenomenon of political dictatorship was not challenged, starting with Stalin and later Mao. Instead, it was regularized, through the inclusion of their countries into the newly formed United Nations.

Also, the actual war was not fought out of altruistic humanitarian concerns, to do the right thing and oppose dictatorship on principle. The basis of the fight was *defense*, to avoid domination. As noble as the sacrifices were, they still derived from direct self-interest.

Most deeply of all, we did not recognize, much less address, the issue of tribalism. Germany and Japan were tribes - at that point in time, bad tribes. But we were tribes as well, and just as susceptible to atrocious behavior. Suppressing a few aberrant tribes in no way solved the underlying problem. One can say that the United Nations was an attempt to do this, but just as the U.S. Declaration of Independence's "*All men are created equal*" did not extend to African-American slaves and Native Americans, and women, it did not go far enough.

In this article, when I refer to countries, societies, cultures, religions, and groups, underneath them all is the root distinction of tribe, and also the question of which tribal behaviors we should celebrate, and which we should oppose - and why.

Following the war, and notwithstanding the rise of the Iron Curtain and Mao's defeat of the Chinese nationalists, things changed dramatically. There was a huge peace dividend, which with thoughtful governance - the Marshall Plan, the G.I. Bill, etc., led to real progress. This persisted throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s, in literally countless different ways. But then the old patterns - history repeating itself - returned again. New industrial leaders became dictators in their own right. Politicians again acted only for their own benefit.

It is now apparent that the most important consequence of this period, other than the prosperity that was achieved - in some countries, largely in the West, was globalization, due to the effect - again - of technology: power generation, aviation and shipping; and computing and communications. But we typically think of globalization only in economic terms, how it enabled the exploitation of natural resources, and human resources - the recruiting of cheap labor, in many cases for both from countries - the "Third World" - where the few still exercised absolute control over the many. And while economic globalization illustrated clearly two primal aspects of human nature - our complete disconnect from the natural world, and from other humans - hence our continuing eagerness to abuse them, other significant aspects of what was happening were for the most part ignored.

Globalization revealed a whole series of fault lines - discontinuities - between different societies. The human species had migrated out of Africa and around the world, and then - in relative isolation - developed in myriad different ways. Now these differences were becoming clear. And in many cases they were not compatible - there was no possibility of a balanced relationship between them. So resolutions were forced - this is still happening today, typically with little thought and planning, or the approval of the affected populations. In situation after situation we are mixing oil with water. It doesn't work very well.

This is what Fukuyama missed. If there is ever to be a positive end to history, if we are ever to evolve to a species where democracy actually works well - everywhere including in every social sphere, not only political, these disconnects and discontinuities are going to have to be resolved. If this can be done, intelligently and peacefully, the world, and the rest of life, can have a future. If not, we will commit collective suicide, and take out many of the other species on earth with us.

### **Human/nature**

The most important disconnect, between human beings and nature, unfortunately is also the one that is most frequently ignored. We fail to acknowledge both the ecological character of our natural world and its limitations. We are mistreating it to such an extent that not only have we destroyed many specific species and habitats, we pose a grave risk to the entire life-supporting structure.

That this is the case, despite all the protestations of pro-environmental beliefs that people now commonly make, is proven by our actions, which can be described as *death by a trillion cuts*. Each person, every day, through consumption and employment, harms the natural ecology in at least ten if not a hundred different ways. From the exhaust of our for the most part private transportation, to the food we clear primary habitats to grow, to the building materials we harvest unsustainably, to the actual land we flatten for the buildings, the list goes on and on.

Nature, our planetary environment, is not infinite. It can only take so many cuts before it bleeds to death.

## **Rich/poor**

The other discontinuities are social in nature. They include the basic differences within our class structure (between rich and poor); in our political organization (between dictatorship and democracy); in spiritual belief (between fundamentalist true believer and secular); and in our overall social philosophy (between modern and traditional.)

*“Throughout recorded time, and probably since the end of the Neolithic Age, there have been three kinds of people in the world, the High, the Middle, and the Low. They have been subdivided in many ways, they have borne countless different names, and their relative numbers, as well as their attitude toward one another, have varied from age to age; but the essential structure of society has never altered. Even after enormous upheavals and seemingly irrevocable changes, the same pattern has always reasserted itself, just as a gyroscope will always return to equilibrium, however far it is pushed one way or the other.”*

- 1984, George Orwell

Inequality to-date has been *the* common feature of the human experience. It is fundamental in part because it is reinforced, and thereby passed from generation to generation, by social custom and even religious belief. If you are born to a low station in life, you are told that you should accept your *fate*. It is a reflection of the natural order of the universe. It’s just the way things are.

We now understand, though, that this belief is nonsense (like our view that we are somehow separate from the natural environment). There is a common human experience – there is such a thing as human nature. No one is inherently different from anyone else. This in turn implies that, within reasonable tolerances, we should all be equal. And this has been reinforced by the widespread availability of formal education, which basically prepares us to fulfill any social role. There is no justification for the members of a particular group to always get the most privileged positions.

What is distressing, then, is that in the face of such a realization, inequality (and inflexibility in class structure) is actually increasing. The rich are getting richer and the poor, poorer. Also, the number of the poor is increasing as well. Indeed, the scale of the inequality has become absurd. Individuals such as Jeff Bezos and Mark Zuckerberg make historical absolute monarchs seem as paupers. They have more wealth than the populations of entire nations.

This fault line, between the rich and the poor, exists between the nations of the industrialized world and those that are still predominantly agricultural; and, within all nations, between their social and political elites and the underclass.

This discontinuity is only likely to get worse, and it portends a power struggle of immense scale. The wealthy have economic power, which they use to buy political power and through this protection from the poor. But the poor have the power of numbers, which is more than a match

for any such protection. (The rich are easy to find!) Throughout history all great accumulations of wealth ultimately have been redistributed, in one way or another. The wealthy can be forced to share, to accomplish a leveling of society as through the high taxes imposed in such countries as Sweden, but this is the rare exception. The normal means to redistribution is through popular revolution.

### **Dictatorship/democracy**

Another common human experience is subjugation under a dictatorship. (Of course the two, class structure and dictatorial political systems, are linked.) Ever since the first societies were established, individuals (and families) have parleyed advantages and sought to obtain positions of power such that they could dictate to others. And, to a large extent, they have succeeded. Many early human groups evolved feudal systems and then progressed to monarchies and empires. Being one of the low in wealth was inseparable from one's paucity of political power.

Now, and also through education, we understand that democracy is the preferred political organization. It is consistent with human equality and further the idea of personal responsibility, that individuals are responsible for their lives including as part of larger social groups, and that they should exercise this through democratic self-rule systems.

But, similar to the growth in wealth inequality, we have also seen a strengthening of dictatorship, in recent decades in China, Russia, and the Islamic world (through Islamic theocracy). And just as the rich seek to protect themselves from the poor, so dictators strive to ward off democratic ambitions, using great violence and repression as their means.

There is a fault line between the democracies of the world and these dictatorships, which is not being addressed in a serious and concerted manner. Indeed, the dictatorships are now viewed as acceptable, even legitimate, and the suffering of their peoples ignored. The standard argument is that with capitalism dictatorial nations over time will accumulate wealth, and that this will somehow propel a change to democracy. Supporters of this idea, which is called "constructive engagement," fail to address the issue, proven by such nations as Saudi Arabia, that great wealth does not automatically translate into political freedom. Indeed, the dictators in these countries have used their wealth to strengthen their rule.

Proponents of constructive engagement also hold the view that during the putative transition to democracy, the dictatorships will behave in a benign fashion towards the rest of the world. This is also false, since it fails to acknowledge that autocrats regularly engage in unconscionable behavior - including through conspiracies with each other, which have intentional wide-ranging consequences. This is the simple strategy of diversion. Creating problems elsewhere helps take the heat off you.

Capitalism or not, the discord between dictatorship and democracy will inevitably give rise to conflict, including potentially of such a scale that world peace itself is threatened.

## **Fundamentalist/secular**

Another discontinuity has as its basis differences in spiritual belief. Many people argue that the established religious faiths cannot be trusted, and that their assertions of miracles and direct communications with god - possession of the *keys to heaven* - are insupportable. (For atheists, this skepticism extends even to the existence of god.) Out of respect they accept the faiths, but believe it is essential that such spirituality (some would call them cults) be kept separate from society's other segments, notably government and education. Fundamentalists on the other hand believe that their faiths reveal the whole and the absolute truth, God's Truth, and that this must form the foundation of all aspects of society.

The wall between these two groups leads to a variety of forms of conflict. Theocrats regularly repress non-believing populations, including even in democracies by imposing their social positions (such as with Christian evangelicals and their opposition to evolutionary theory, gay sexual preference, and the right of women to control their lives). In a few cases they attempt to dictate their beliefs with open violence and across borders (e.g., ISIS).

Like the other discontinuities, this is another fault line that is extremely difficult to bridge. The party responsible for the repression has to compromise, but since this means changing their deepest-held convictions, and personal identity, they are rarely willing to do so.

## **Modern/traditional**

All of these discontinuities reflect one further distinction, between traditional world views and modern. While the modern world has many elements deserving of criticism, particularly its unswerving faith in capitalism (for anyone with intellectual honesty, it is self-evident that "free markets" are not free), one area in which it surpasses the traditional is education. Ignorance and superstition remain the norm in many traditional societies. They are actually used by the power structures in these societies, in particular religions, to maintain their dictatorship.

But traditional society also has many elements worthy of merit, notably that life is lived at a slower and less stressful pace. This is linked to its foundation in agriculture - there's less to do when the crops are growing, and it further strengthens the human connection to the natural world. (People spend more time out of doors.) And finally, traditional societies emphasize family and community, which in the modern world have been devalued. Today, the idea of *success*, to achieve more and more, has become paramount. You should sacrifice everything, including if need be your family - and your health, in its quest.

Nonetheless, it is now widely accepted that the modern urban/industrial model is preferable to the traditional rural/agricultural model. Everyone around the world has seen the big city lifestyle on TV, and it is viewed as the best, the aim for which all societies should strive. However, the modern model, through which social advances are considered to be inevitable, actually has many

flaws and on closer inspection it is apparent that the flaws are of such a magnitude that they cannot simply be worked out (the crusade for never-ending growth!). They are *intrinsic*, and because of this a completely different social design is required. But, unsound or not, the model has been adopted and it is now being spread worldwide. Most importantly, it is being imposed on traditional rural/agricultural societies that still have their own problems to solve (the typical problems that attach to such societies, e.g., meeting fully one's basic needs), thereby effectively giving them two sets of problems to deal with at the same time, and which also tend to exacerbate each other. Additionally, for traditional societies all of this is occurring post-population booms, not pre- (as in Western Europe and the United States), greatly increasing the strain.

It is therefore no surprise that these societies have a wide array of problems. Further, as economic globalization increases, and with it urbanization and poverty, their problems will undoubtedly intensify.

Indeed, the goal of economic globalization is actually the destruction of traditional culture. All around the world thousands of distinct cultures have evolved. And as they did they established their own languages, and ways of thinking which the languages enabled; structures, food, and clothing; and ideas about all manner of subjects, starting with religious or spiritual beliefs. The forces of economic globalization - the different types of social institutions that are responsible for it - want to eliminate all of these differences, all of this cultural diversity. Their objective is a culture of sameness. According to them, everyone should speak the same language, and think the same; everyone should live and work in the same types of structures, eat the same food, and wear the same clothes; and everyone should have the same beliefs, the faith therein, regarding the origin and purpose of the universe and of life.

In summary, the globalization of human society, through which cultures that have never had contact with each other have now become intimately acquainted, has thrown into sharp relief a number of core differences that exist between them. And these discontinuities, the flaws and variations in thinking that they represent, are clashing again and again, causing trouble in one location after another. But, the problem is - for some characteristics - they cannot be reconciled. There is no way to bring them together in harmony. The only approach that offers any chance of success, then, is to destroy – or transcend – these characteristics. We must find the means to eliminate or move beyond the discontinuities such that they can never arise again, and the world can achieve balance and peace.

You may note that this is a curious situation. Overall, we want to preserve diversity, but with the exception of the beliefs and systems that are responsible for the different forms of dictatorship.

### **How real change occurs**

All of this in turn raises a hidden question: How do things change? Indeed, most people, including social leaders, ignore the question entirely, because they already KNOW how change

occurs. They are wrong (or lying), but a full examination of their failure (or deceit) is beyond the scope of this piece. In short, they believe (or swear) that change happens gradually, and that a consistent pressure in the right direction will achieve it.

This is not how real change, beginning with evolution itself, takes place. Consistent pressure is not enough. Instead, the energy addition has to build, escalate rapidly, until the *tipping point* is reached and the *system equilibrium* breaks. In other words, real change too is discontinuous. The new form is fundamentally different from the old. In scientific terms, there is a *phase transition*, and which is characterized by *chaos*. (Please see my piece, [Chaos Analysis Questionnaire](#).)

The funny thing is, we all learn this as children, through experiences with bullies - our first exposure to social dictatorship, other than our parents and teachers - who may be bullies as well. Bullies have to be confronted, otherwise they will never stop - things will never change. You can't reason with them. They either need to be fought and defeated, or a stronger power appealed to - ironically, also parents and teachers - to accomplish the same.

We all learn about real change by the time we are ten years old! But, we forget it - we elect to ignore this formative lesson. Why? Because standing up to bullies is risky. You may be harmed - you may lose. Many people decide it is better to adapt, to keep a low profile, than to bear the risk. And as the years go by they invent ingenious arguments and excuses - constructive engagement, for example - to disguise their fear and cowardice. But this doesn't alter the truth. If you want change, you have to make it happen. You have to do whatever it takes.

All of the disconnects and discontinuities that I have described demand real change. And they all involve confronting bullies. This begins with humans over nature, and us individually versus other people. We are the bullies. The rich, the political dictators, the true believers, and the modern world ideologues, they are bullies as well.

Each must be attacked based on the specific nature of the repression they impose, and the power structures they have established. This examination too is beyond the scope of this piece. For instance, to deprogram someone from a cult is a well understood process and which involves a lot of time and steps - it is analogous to escaping the legacy of being a victim of child abuse.

Even so, there are some commonalities.

## **Strategies**

There is a vital distinction in strategy based on the nature of the dictatorship that we are seeking to overcome. Some are "overall," or in chaos theory *global*, including rule by political and religious tyrannies, and also humans over nature. Others exist in societies which as a whole are democratic - there are elections and the people vote, but are manifested within specific sectors or subsystems. And then there is personal dictatorship, for those people who are unwilling or unable to curb their desire to control someone else - e.g., oppressive partners and employers.



The first is the clearest, yet at the same time most difficult. Against national tyranny, the people must revolt. The justification *is* survival and the means include popular uprisings up to and including armed rebellion. The populations in all of the remaining political and religious dictatorships around the world should confront and overthrow their tyrants. It's been done in many societies already and they can do it too. This includes Burma, China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and many others. It is time to get moving!

Accomplishing this in turn would eliminate the dictatorship/democracy discontinuity. This would extend the Zone of Peace, currently comprising the national democracies, worldwide. War would be eliminated. The United Nations would become a Community of Democracies.

This change requires people to work together, directly, in protest movements and rebel groups. On the other hand, to change the global system of humans over nature, and also cases of personal domination, requires the population to work for the most part as individuals. Saving nature means cutting your consumption as much as possible - evaluating yourself and your life and striving to have the least possible impact. (There can be a group effort, too, against people who refuse to do it - e.g., with the ostracism of conspicuous consumers, and of course against corporations and other developers.) For personal domination - bullies, the steps include to ensure that you are not a bully yourself, to stand up to any bullies that attempt to harm you, and again as a group to defend individuals who are being harmed.

Within a democracy things are a lot easier. Just by spreading education, and creating voting majorities, it is possible to confront all sub-populations that are attempting to dictate, e.g., the aforementioned evangelicals. They have their freedom of speech, but legislation can be passed (and in some places already has been) to protect the teaching of evolution, sexual preference, the rights of women, against incendiary hate speech, etc.

The most important sub-group to oppose, though, is comprised of the extremely wealthy (including the leaders of corporations). While they are not all monsters by any means, their class is responsible for more wrongs than any other. The 1% are a social disease. They in fact underlie all institutional dictatorship worldwide, political and religious, and traditional and modern. It is not an overstatement to say that almost all the problems we and the environment experience begin with them.

While I do not accept many aspects of the story of Jesus Christ, that he was the Son of God and also his emphasis on love (this is too ambiguous and pacifist for me), I continue to be astounded by his opposition to *the moneychangers at the temple gates*. He fought the dictatorship of the rich over the poor, and was murdered for it. And it has never gone away. When we complain about the influence of Wall Street and corporations, we are missing the fact that they are the new moneychangers. Even more, they do not deserve their obscene wealth. They have not *earned* it. We control the nature of our society and there must be a prohibition, an absolute prohibition, on anyone obtaining a fundamentally unequal monetary position. Our social architectures are high

pyramids. They are the people on the top level. Everyone else below them is pressured, and the people at the base are obliterated. We can have an architecture, as the Ancient Greeks - the founders of democracy, advised, of low rectangles. And we can do this without resorting to communism - the elimination of private property. There is a middle way, and with the healthy debates and votes enabled by democracy, we can achieve it.

(Note: I use the example of Jesus principally for two reasons: to applaud his brave leadership as a class activist; and to demonstrate that the path for believers is to focus on the positive aspects of their faiths and to reject the divisive.)

Christ's (and others') activism against the rich remains unfulfilled, and it is up to us to complete it. In democracies, the means again are through elections and then to impose extremely high taxes. I have argued for tax rates that scale up to 90-95%, and stringent estate taxes as well, with the proceeds going to public trust funds for environmental reclamation and social programs for the poor. (This will further require steps to reclaim the money hidden in international tax shelters - estimates range from seven to over thirty trillion dollars.) As the writer George Monbiot of the *Guardian* so aptly put it, we should "*tax them into oblivion.*"

At a minimum, raising taxes is necessary to eliminate the perverse incentives in our economic system that reward selfishness and punish selflessness.

A global change alternative is to eliminate the *profit motive*. We have the power to ban for-profit enterprises and instead to establish everything as non-profits. The rich argue that they need the motivation of extreme wealth. This is ludicrous. The many individuals who work for today's non-profits (including teachers, social workers, and environmental and human rights activists), and also police, soldiers and firefighters (and government employees in general), have much greater accomplishments and value. Their drive to make a difference, including for some with the risk of the ultimate sacrifice, creates lives that are personally rewarding and which contribute directly to society.

The challenge to implement this transition would be great, but it can be done. It would require a new form of ownership that avoids the pitfalls of the communist collectives. However, there are options, for example, to have industrial and agricultural non-profits controlled by social investment funds in which the entire general public owns shares, as a new form of social security. This would also mean the end of both equity and debt markets as they exist now.

But it would still be capitalism, although not in the way we presently understand it. Capital is money, pure and simple. Any economic system that uses money necessarily is capitalistic, at least in part. Even communist countries embraced capitalism in this way, laying the groundwork for their corruption. The objective is to find a way to divorce selfishness from the system, not to destroy it completely.

Moving on to the dictatorships, once the tyrants are overthrown their wealth should be confiscated and their businesses nationalized.

In conclusion, these are revolutionary actions: to rise up against dictators, and to restructure society to protect nature and to eliminate inequality. This is real change. Our overlords obfuscate that only small steps are needed, and that we should never try anything more profound. Their objective with this, which to-date they have fulfilled, is to make us feel powerless. This is how they perpetuate themselves - we don't fight back - and ensure that the structure described in Orwell's *1984* quote above is never transformed.

### **Be a revolutionary**

Democracy is being selected by evolutionary mechanisms, but it may well fail. And if it does, worldwide, there is no hope. Tyrants could care less about the ecology. Once the tipping point is reached (in this case to system collapse), and not only for temperatures - already reached!, but also the specific tipping points at which distinct plant habitats and biospheres will disappear, the human-caused world-wide extinction event will become irreversible. There will further no longer be sufficient food and water to support our huge population - this has already begun, and eventually there will be massive human die-offs. This in turn will lead to global pandemonium.

It's happening now and it is happening fast. We used to think it wouldn't be until 2050 before there was widespread social collapse, but this now seems optimistic. The viability of human society even by 2030 is questionable.

Personally, I have decided in my life that being human simply isn't good enough. I want to be something more, something new. Since evolution for our species *is* being driven by individual and through this social behavior, I have tried to figure out what the behavior should be, practice it, and encourage others to do so as well. So much destruction, beginning with of nature, is already unavoidable. But we can still save the world - many habitats will regrow. The changes I have described, because they are behavioral, could spread in very little time - even a single generation. Please - be a revolutionary. Refuse to live in fear, and to hide in a tribal identity. Make your life worthwhile in a bigger way, beyond your own immediate aspirations. Fight all forms of dictatorship, individually and with others. Have the least possible impact on the natural world. And, as part of this, if you decide to have children postpone it at least until your late twenties, and then have only one or two. As terrible as it sounds, every child born is a new eighty year pattern of consumption and destruction, essentially one more locust. There is a balanced level at which the human species can coexist with nature, but we are already well beyond it. We have to reduce our numbers.