



RISK

Its relationship to

VULNERABILITY, PREGNABILITY, UNPREPAREDNESS, and IMPERILMENT

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THE SETTING

Western society – and in particular the United States – is quite unaware of **major undefined risks** that even threaten its continued existence. On many sides and in many ways, life -- as we know and enjoy it -- is vulnerable to being destroyed.

There may be several reasons for this mortal danger.

- First, the West has been the primary source for development of technology that has greatly reduced human labor in providing a life style of considerable ease. With that ease has come unwarranted confidence that, should any difficulty arise, a technological solution would readily be capable of resolving or overcoming such difficulty. This could also be described as belief in *the inevitability of progress*.
- Second, the West has generally ignored the dark side of mankind's nature – namely, the existence of and propensity for *evil*. This phenomenon is not just a religious concept – it is the cause of vicious, brutal, unthinkable behavior in every culture. Believing incredibly

that *laws* can effectively protect society against this force, most effort expended to thwart it – whether international, national or personal – presumes ***universal compliance with laws***. Of course, the fallacy of legal solutions is that they generally only stimulate evildoers to create more sophisticated ways to overcome them. Wars are proof that laws cannot control evil.

- Third and likely related to the preceding two reasons, the West seems to have difficulty in *identifying* – prior to their occurrence – sources of vulnerability, pregnability, unpreparedness, and imperilment. This is true at all levels of society: individual, family, corporate, nationally and internationally. This difficulty appears to be due to either (a) minimal ***motivation*** to imagine what could go wrong as long as life continues as currently being experienced, (b) little or no available ***education or methodology*** for foreseeing potential losses, or (c) small ***reward*** for accurately forecasting loss potential.
- Fourth, traditional approaches to solving problems in today’s complex world generally start at the bottom and work their way to the top. And long before they reach the level where effective countermeasures could be implemented, the perceived problem often fades in significance to the point of becoming irrelevant and unsolved. An example is the high consumption of energy in the US that far exceeds US production, causing vast outflow of US financial resources to cultures hostile to US interests. These irrational situations will continue to exist until “***top-down***” solutions are pursued. Paramount to the resistance to “top-down” solutions in the West is historic distrust of the centralized perspective and authority required for those solutions.
- Fifth, the West is ***reactionary*** to *all* types of risk – whether due to weather, war, terrorism, disease, or technology (e.g., nuclear power generation). Part of this trait may be due to public preference for success, achievement, the new, or the good -- over entertaining any possibility of loss. Thereby recognition of risk is deferred to a state where reaction ends up as the only option.
- Sixth, the populace in the West traditionally has delegated to politicians the role of *leadership* – trusting them implicitly with full responsibility to identify and manage all societal risk. However, that delegation has become unwarranted, as politicians increasingly allow *popularity* to displace either courage or wisdom.
- Finally, Western culture – due to its domination of world markets – generally views risk as a ***financial*** issue. The approach? Delay response to risk as long as possible – then throw unlimited money at it to extinguish it. It can be defined as

CRITICAL INCIDENT SYNDROME

Intuitive and often over-reactive response to a situation that has required management attention and correction for some time but continues to be neglected until triggered by an unexpected loss -- personally or vicariously - - of considerable magnitude, whereupon corrective resources previously unavailable are released in abundance.

THE SOLUTION

Three R's -- **Recognition, Rationality, and Resolve** – provide the path to awareness and control of major undefined risks facing the Western world.

- **Recognition** -- John B. Mumford, in his recent John Wiley book, ***BROKE: What Every American Business Must Do to Restore Our Financial Stability and Protect Our Future***, lists over 20 issues where major undefined risk is central to impending peril. In other words, leaders in business, education, church, and government all fail to recognize the nature and extent of major risks that currently threaten the survival of the US -- *debt, drugs, energy, terror, law enforcement, and education* – to name a few. The foundation for survival must be laid in *recognizing* risk. No risk can be addressed, evaluated, ranked, and controlled until it is *recognized* and clearly identified.

Recognition of risk occurs either *deliberately* or *inadvertently*. Unfortunately in the West, almost all risk is identified inadvertently or after-the-fact via unsuspected losses that suddenly appear. This delayed means of recognizing risk is compounded by the West's traditional *reactionary response* to loss. One example is the massive and irrational retrogression in comfort of airline travel resulting from terrorist use of airliners as weapons on 9/11.

The obvious key to recognition of anything is a *means, technique, or method* to detect it. A major reason for the current state of major undefined risk in the West is the apparent *lack of methodology for identifying it!* Until there is widespread availability and use of a process that insures systematic, all-compassing, global identification of risk, virtually all major risk in the West will remain undefined.

But there is also good news. A widely-proven methodology exists for identifying, evaluating, ranking, and controlling every conceivable risk – whether legal, technological,

social, financial, cultural, or political. It is known as **SMART™** (*Systems Methodology Applied to Risk Termination*). So Recognition is *possible*.

- **Rationality** -- It is not sufficient however to simply *recognize* major undefined risk. Rational *action* must follow. What *is* Rationality? It is a state of being aligned with *reason* – controlled by principles that are subject to open examination and tested for soundness.

In the West -- though blessed by centuries of scientific progress, there has been an ongoing tension between two major forces. On one side, there is conviction that cultural values like accountability, compassion, awareness, truthfulness, and courage are essential for successful living. On the other side, there is a strong urge to ignore those values in favor of opportunism, gratification, selfishness, pleasure, and short-term gain.

Those two forces collide in many venues but most significantly in government, economics, and business where major undefined risk lies yet incognito. Rationality demands vision, boldness, and leadership to overcome the status quo of satisfied short-sightedness. Rationality also contains the secret to survival of Western civilization.

- **Resolve** -- The third and final element in overcoming the peril facing the Western world from major undefined risk is **Resolve** – the resoluteness to follow through to finality the results of Recognition and Rationality.

The taproot of Resolve is “courage based on conviction.” Resolve is learned, not inherited. It is generated under fire. On the other hand, because there is *certainty of success* underlying the action produced by Resolve, confidence in implementing countermeasures against identified risk grows and becomes a successful way of life.

Major undefined risk need not threaten the survivability of the Western world any longer. The pathway to overcoming **VULNERABILITY, PREGNABILITY, UNPREPAREDNESS, and IMPERILMENT** is clear.

It is time to walk in it . . .

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