

EDITORIAL

A Renaissance for Mankind, Or a Descent into the Maelström

by Mike Billington

Aug. 26—Edgar A. Poe’s short story, “A Descent into the Maelström,” a scientific investigation of the changes in geometric relations which take place during a phase-change in nature, and the role of human cognition in recognizing and investigating those changes, provides the necessary guide to reflecting on the historic phase-change taking place in the world today. Poe’s characters are two brothers whose ship is caught in a great whirlpool off the Norwegian coast. As the ship is pulled ever downward towards destruction, one brother recognizes the changed geometry which exists within this vortex, different than had existed in the previous space, and creatively discovers the laws of this new paradigm, saving himself, while his brother, terrified, his mind in a haze, clings to the old paradigm and plunges to his death.

The world will never return to the era from which we are now departing, entering into a new geometry. This is true of the pandemic, ending the era of privatized health care and the deprivation of health care for the poor nations of the world; it is true of the global financial system, horribly bankrupt for decades and now racing into a hyper-inflationary or deflationary bust, a system which cannot be saved; it is true of the era of endless wars unleashed by former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair’s 1999 declaration of the end of national sovereignty, unleashing the Anglo-American “regime change” wars; and, finally, it is the end of the delusion of “liberal democracy” as the “end of history,” and of the U.S. as the “unipolar superpower.”

Do not imagine that this means a better world will automatically result. The world could proceed as did the seaman’s frightened brother, clinging to delusions of the dying Empire, willing to submit to economic decay, war, pestilence and famine rather than reject the false axioms, to discover the new principles required to not only survive, but to build a more perfect world.

The end of the 20-year disaster in Afghanistan provides the crucial test: Will the U.S. break from the British Empire, and act on its actual self-interest, to see Afghanistan transformed from a maelström of terrorism, drugs, and perpetual war, into a hub for regional and continent-wide development, restoring its ancient role as the “land of a thousand cities,” the crossroad of eastern and western civilization?

The British Empire, like the dinosaurs, deserves nothing better than to become extinct. Tony Blair and other spokesmen for the Empire are bellowing their rage, like Percy Shelly’s Ozymandias, that the United States has failed to obey their dictates—or as Blair so revealingly put it, that the Biden Administration has followed the “imbecilic political slogan about ending ‘the forever wars.’” Ending such wars will, indeed, as Blair fears, mean the end of Empire. Perhaps the bloody ISIS terrorist bombs last week in Kabul were aimed at stopping President Biden from sticking to the August 31 deadline for getting out, as the British and their assets in the U.S. have demanded. Is it coincidence, or are the British still deploying terrorists to achieve their ends?

This is the moment of truth for civilization.

Lyndon LaRouche's concept of the "Four Powers" required as a minimum force to end the Empire, is now before us. The four great cultures of Eurasia—China, Russia, India, and the United States (as the distilled representative of European culture)—can unite at this pregnant moment with the Muslim countries of the region, to make Afghanistan a model for ending the disintegration of nations around the world, suffering from the decades, or even centuries, of deprivation, poverty, and colonial slavery.

From this, a new Bretton Woods financial system can be molded by the same Four Powers, and the grateful nations around the world which would join in the deliberations. From this new Bretton Woods, the failed monetary system can be replaced by a Hamiltonian credit system to fuel the recovery of the collapsing western economies, driven by the export of the capital goods demanded everywhere to lift all nations out of poverty, becoming modern industrial nations. China's Belt and Road Initiative has demonstrated the efficacy

of such an approach.

This is not just the moral thing to do; without it, disintegration and nuclear war are virtually inevitable. Mankind has faced such moments of peril in the past. In some, the failure to act led to a descent into dark ages and depopulation. In some, people of vision and creativity led in forging a new Renaissance—Nicholas of Cusa in 15th-Century Europe, Zhu Xi in 12th-Century China, Harun al-Rashid in the 8th-Century Golden Age of the Abbasid Caliphate, and the Gupta Golden Age of the 4th and 5th Centuries. The Confucian Renaissance taking place now in China gives hope for the future, but in the age of supersonic transport and the colonization of space, any true renaissance must be truly universal.

This is precisely the message of Lyndon and Helga LaRouche over the past half-century, one which can and must be achieved—or as Helga Zepp-LaRouche often states, an era in which "we all can leave the age of immature adolescence behind us, and enter an era of adulthood, in which we concentrate on the common aims of mankind."