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Ashok Dhillon has over 45 years of front-line business experience in Canada and International markets. His extensive experience gives him in-depth knowledge and intuitive insights into macro and micro, national and international, geo-political and economic realities and trends.

The Rise of the Right – The Return of Ignorance



Donald Trump's Inner Team: (Left to Right) Steven Mnuchin, Steve Bannon, Peter Thiel, Jared Kushner, Anthony Scaramucci

Ironically, the end of the Second World War (*WWII*) brought greater national openness to the World. The sheer widespread scale of the conflict, encompassing the entire planet, had an unanticipated benefit at the end of the war. For the first time, there was a general awareness of all peoples of most other peoples in the World. Prior to *WWII*, continents, countries and people were generally isolated, unaware and uninterested in others of faraway places, with whom they had little interaction. But, in this Great War, as compared to the previous Great War (*World War I*), not only Europe, Britain and their “Colonies” were involved, but Japan’s primary role in this Great War had directly brought in all of Asia. And, to a limited degree even South America was involved.

Modern planes, ships, submarines and armies were embattled over and in every ocean and continent on this planet. And while other animosities and conflicts arose after the World War II, these conflicts, such as the “Cold War” between the democratic West and the undemocratic Communist Countries, and their various proxy wars (*Korea, Vietnam*), further focused the attention of all people, on parts of the planet other than their own, thus making them aware of the smallness and oneness of their World.

The supply chains created and maintained during the war, were after the war enhanced and built upon to usher in the era of globalization. The rapid rise of multinational business, post-*WWII*, added to that awareness, and the increased ability to travel the World by regular people for business and or pleasure, sealed the sense of others as being generally benign, profitable and neighbourly.

The general peace and prosperity post World War II enhanced the goodwill of all, and the last three decades of active globalization opened trade and

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borders. Ease of travel and general acceptance of most all nationalities shrunk the World down to a practical - everyone's backyard. This led to an increase in trade and prosperity and an unprecedented rise in financial liquidity, significant alleviation of global poverty, and an unusually prosperous time almost universally.

During these decades, old animosities faded and old enemies became friends and allies. Even the most infamous "Wall", the "Berlin Wall", fell, and East and West Berlin became one.



Politically, the major countries of the World were never friendlier, and Europe, the most active battleground of the 20th Century, became united as the European Union (EU). Even China threw away the bamboo wall and opened itself to the World (*particularly the West*) for business and trade. The World was transformed from closed doors/borders and closed minds, to openness to others, and "freer" trade and interaction.

That trend seems to be now reversing. It was perhaps too much of a good thing.

It would seem the old saying: "*All good things must come to an end*", is true, as towards the end of 2008, it all came to a sudden and shocking end as excess greed encouraged by increasing deregulation in the US led to the usual high jinks of the financial industry. The World plunged into a financial abyss, from which it was barely rescued by the most extraordinary actions of Governments and their Central Banks, which then culminated into the "Great Recession", which it can be argued, the World is still trying to recover from.

The intervening years, from 2008 to 2016, were not kind to the majority of people around the World as their prosperity diminished, and their rising expectations crushed.

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Over these past 8 years, as the ordinary people struggled to maintain their lifestyle, or worse, fought to survive, Governments and their Central Banks embarked on an unprecedented spree of unleashing liquidity hereto unseen in scope and scale, to recover global prosperity, but through a bizarre “trickle down” economic plan (*theory*) which didn't work, but trapped the Trillions they had printed and pushed out into the top end of the financial system, benefitting solely the top 1% to 10%, with negligible “trickle down effect” to regular people.

This excruciatingly slow “Recovery” for the masses left people struggling and stewing while their frustration and resentment grew. That frustration has resulted in the stunning reversal in Great Britain in the form of an entirely unexpected “Brexit” vote (*a Referendum Vote on whether Britain should stay in the European Union (EU) or not; Vote came in to exit*), followed by an even greater political upset in the United States, where defying all prognostications, Americans elected the most controversial political candidate possibly in its history, Donald J. Trump.



The Americans rejected the slow, steady but considerable achievements of the democratic (*Liberal/progressive*) policies of the Obama Administration, to be extended and improved on by Hillary Clinton, for the “Fix Everything Now”, “Make America Great Again” improbable promises of “No Experience Trump”, and the verifiably destructive, regressive policies of the past Republican Administrations, from which America and the World were barely recovering.

But that is the nature of the frustrated electorate, willing to gamble steady but verifiable progress for the hawking of instant relief from snake oil salesmen.

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But this time around the trend is global, where citizens of every country want bold, unconventional strong leaders who care not for convention or protocol, political correctness or the “kinder and gentler policies” but want “don’t give a damn” leaders, even if these are chronically untruthful and misleading in their pronouncements and promises, and ride rough shod over their own citizen’s rights.

Cases in point you ask? Well, Putin of Russia; Xi of China; Modi of India; Duterte of Philippines; Erdoğan of Turkey and now Trump of the US. All of these leaders came to power as strong leaders promising instant change towards some former greatness, on the backs of their citizen’s discontent (*except Xi, he was chosen by the Communist Party*). These leaders promised to make their respective countries great again, so far with decidedly limited results.



Riding this wave of universal discontent, there are quite a few more right wing ultra nationalist political Parties in the wings in Europe and elsewhere, itching to take their countries backwards to stoked nationalism, closed borders, protected national industries through high tariffs, anti immigrant pogroms, revived and restored racism, restricted human rights on some segments of society, misogyny, heightened suspicion and hatred of “others” on colour, race, cultural, and religious grounds, yet, somehow restore some long lost grandeur through renewed isolating nationalism.

These policies promising “greatness again” to frustrated people cannot deliver, as there is no bringing jobs back, and across the board prosperity, without full and open trade for any country.

Multinational corporations cannot survive if they don’t source from cheaper jurisdictions. That is a fact of life of the 21st century, and technology and automation is not job intensive trends for any country.

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Rebuilding infrastructure has limited prospects and is not long-term sustainable job or economic growth engine, ask China. Needed infrastructure is good long term investment for any country, but in the shorter term it results in shorter term “projects specific” jobs, and lots of national debt.

Stoking virulent nationalism and claims of racial “exceptionalism” leads to wars or World Wars, as our last two (2) Great Wars showed horrifically, with the only thing “exceptional” to come out them being carnage, the death of millions of young men and innocent people, and for Germany and Japan (*both victims of their own hubris and beliefs of racial exceptionalism*) total destruction. So going back to standing alone as proud nationalists is going backwards to stupid isolation, falling business and trade, therefore shrinking prosperity, and potential destructive conflicts.

Rolling back acceptance, tolerance, understanding, empathy and human rights is simply to negate the past liberating decades of human progress and go back to the worst of human conditions of disunity, selfishness and suspicion. If one has any doubts about the veracity of these statements, one need only look at periods of history where nationalism and isolation were the theme of the day, and note the resultant effects of such policies. Wars and poverty came from isolation and nationalism; and prosperity came from openness and peace.

None of regressive, negative human qualities are going to create jobs or bring prosperity to the disenfranchised. It’s downright ignorant to think it can.

It’s going to take a lot more creative thinking to manifest that kind of utopian condition where all people are prosperous and happy, certainly falling back to the tried and tested human recipe for disaster through isolation will do the exact opposite. It’s been proven time and again, all over the World.

The last bunch of geniuses that tried to lift all their countrymen through extreme isolation were the communist leaders of USSR and People’s Republic of China, and look where it got them. They had to abandon those cherished policies of closed economies and give in to the hated open societies of the democratic West, which espoused real equality for ALL, including immigrants of other races, and women. At the end, the utopia seeking communists had to admit economic defeat, capitulate and adopt the despised messy policies of open trade, messy capitalism, freer movement, inviting open borders, and no walls!

