

## Leading the Way to a Brighter Shared Future

DURING OUR MOST CHALLENGING TIMES, LEADERS HAVE EMERGED TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN AN UNTENABLE PRESENT AND AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE. **BY TONY O'DRISCOLL**

Just as a slender ray of hope appeared to be piercing through the ominous COVID-19 clouds that have blanketed humanity in darkness for the last two years, we found ourselves struggling to comprehend the horrific fog of war that has enveloped Ukraine.

Our continued inability to make collective sense of world events since the onset of COVID is a significant source of existential risk for humanity. Since the dawn of time, we have relied on stories that distill the wisdom of our ancestors to guide us through the trials and tribulations of our current lived reality. Today, however, these narratives no longer appear to be holding. This is because our shared reality is changing at ever-accelerating rates and in increasingly unpredictable directions, while the stories we have long relied upon to make sense of our current reality remain unchanged.

As the gap between the stories we believe and the reality we perceive widens, humanity finds itself staring into an abyss of overwhelming uncertainty. Societies that have faced such unfathomable existential crisis in the past typically responded in one of three ways:

1. They collapse.
2. They snapback.
3. They transform.

### A NEW SHARED NARRATIVE

Civilization collapse happens when a society fails to update its story to match its current reality. Snapback happens when a society endeavors to force its current reality to fit back into the contours of its outdated story. Transformation happens when a society successfully updates its story to align with its current reality.

Vladimir Putin's decision to invade the sovereign nation of Ukraine is a prototypical snapback response. His nostalgic aspiration to rebuild a strong and unified Russian civilization has brought us to the brink of another World War.

Throughout history, leaders have emerged to bridge the gap between an untenable present and an uncertain future by creating a transformative narrative that lights the way toward a brighter shared future. As this new story better fits with our current reality, it guides us from a place of fear and aimlessness toward a place of hope and purposefulness.

To avoid the potential of global civilization collapse precipitated by Putin's snapback response, leaders from around the world must formulate and communicate a new transformative shared narrative.

I hope future generations will share stories about how our generation positively changed the course of history. The alternative is too frightening to contemplate. **f**



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