

## The Crash Scenario

Let's imagine: we are end November 2024, three full years from now, and Donald Trump 'wins' the presidential elections and becomes POTUS again - but only thanks to his cronies' massive manipulations of and malversations in the election process.

The result is social and political chaos on an unprecedented scale across the United States, swiftly followed by the near break-up of the country along various states or counties which may or may not federate according to their political colour. But with a fairly stable Republican/Trumpian core at the center wrapping itself in the flag and claiming the legitimacy of being the one and only true United States of America. This (T)rump(lan) state is likely to keep the US Army and the nuclear arsenal under its control. Yet, as very severe disruptions at all levels of American society take place, the Great Power that once was exits from the world stage, leaving China and its smaller betren Russia to rule the roost, along with a few regional powers. But all these nations will also have been more or less profoundly destabilised by the meltdown in the USA.

From then on, political adventurism is likely to prevail, especially at the expense of hitherto relatively stable (Western) Europe. This the more so since the Climate Catastrophe will relentlessly march on, further accelerated by the prevailing chaos. Hence a generalised 'clusterfaktap' will to all probability ensue,

which I'd like to 'conceptualise' in 4 interlinked and intertwined scenarios, namely:

'Barbarian Invasions'

'Mad Max/Children of Men'

'The Intervention'

'Threads'

Comparisons between our epoch and the End of the Roman Empire have (too) often been made, but one analogy is very likely to stand: the 'great invasions'. The reason is as simple as its cause: the climate catastrophe will make large parts of the planet not only inhospitable but plainly inhabitable, and people will face the choice either to die on locale or to move on - to our parts.

Though alike 'invasions' are likely to be triggered also in the Americas and in Africa, and may be even towards the Australian continent, it is its topographical set-up which makes the Eurasian landmass the prominent place for large scale population movements to occur. And this both because it is suitable for land surface travel and because it also harbours the largest number of climate-catastrophe threatened people on the planet.

So really massive numbers of displaced persons are likely to move towards our borders, far more than the numbers we are currently panicking - for all the wrong reasons -about. Their routes will cross countries already in turmoil (West Asia, aka the Middle East, Turkey, Russia) and this will further add to the prevailing chaos. God forbids what is then likely to happen at the East

European borders, but history teaches that any amount of violence is powerless to stop an inflow of sufficiently motivated masses in sufficient numbers (and they will be both).

So (Western) Europe will probably be 'overrun'. Which might not be such a bad thing in itself, was it not for the very probable triggering of the three other scenarios (or rather two, as we'll see later that the 'intervention' item is a somewhat anecdotic, 'loose canon' one)

Mad Max/Children of Men.

Once the 'great resettlement' is on its way, and this amidst the general disruptions caused by the unhinging of the hitherto prevailing, great powers dominated world 'order', everything will depend on the degree and nature of 'governance' the (remaining?) authorities will be able to maintain. Despite the sometimes astonishing resilience of societies and communities in the face of chaos (in war, for instance), optimism in the matter, given the magnitude of the problem, is rather hard to fathom.

'Mad Max' (the film) portrays the scenario of total unravelling of 'law and order' and its replacement by feral bands of Darwinian survivors feasting on violence. That will probably happen in some or even many parts of the continent. But it is unlikely to happen everywhere and every time, giving rise to the much more probable, and possibly even more chilling, 'Children of Men' (also the film) scenario, where 'Mad Max' has been not so

much been avoided as circumscribed to certain locales, while bastions of a (very 'robust') form of law & order have been established in defensible zones. The metaphor 'Israel on steroids' might then come to mind ...

One feature both scenarios have in common, though, is that the life of the largest majority of the people will revert to a Hume-like 'brutish and short' state. And this while everyday existence for the more privileged, facing life in a permanent state of siege, will not be that pleasant either (something 'Children of Men', portrays nerve-rockingly well).

But all this may be only the swan song of the world we might very well be living in after 2024, when - I hesitate to say 'if' - the final scenario, 'Threads' will unfold.

'Threads' is the title of the controversial - and rapidly suppressed - 1984 BBC documentary about the outcomes of a nuclear war hitting the UK. Extremely condensed summary: humanity narrowly survives the destruction, manages to clamber up a bit at a bare 19th century-ish level, before collapsing again, into the Stone Age.

For the past decades the nuclear threat has been the elephant in the room amidst more pressing concerns like the economic/financial crisis and the environmental catastrophe (the former a hiccup, the latter an inescapable, all-encompassing 'situation', btw) - and never mind any amount of other agitations, cultural, religious, ethnic, etc etc. But to-day, with 8 nations

holding nuclear power (the 'traditional four': US, Russia, UK and France; China; denying Israel, and now India and Pakistan also - with Iran, and possibly a few others on the verge of) the bets are of which of them will feel sufficiently threatened (by whom, or what?) to fire off the weapons of mass destruction.

Donald Trump, president of a by then profoundly dis-United States, is not an unlikely contender, as he, the rumour says, almost did 'it' against China during his first term . Trump is indeed mentally weird or disturbed enough to press the red button. Israel is another one, if for very different reasons. India and Pakistan are ever latently on a course of mutually assured destruction - and ours too in the process - but its happening has everything of a mad lottery, and hence not really worth discussing. All other 'atomic' nations are not likely to start a nuclear 'exchange', unless totally desperate. There is one exception though.

The case of Israel brings us to the last 'chapter' of an, in my mind, utterly envisageable Armageddon. In a situation of world-wide chaos, both at the planetary scale as well as at the scale of national and even local communities, the most probable target of the USA's and of Israel's nuclear nuclear war heads is ... Western Europe.

The utter unlikeliness that the targets of Israel's nuclear arsenal would be situated in the Arab World or even Iran for that matter bein undebatable for various reasons, the case for Europe being their their true aim is now seeping

into the mainstream (\*). Its nuclear arsenal is Israel's ultimate 'Doomsday Machine', call it maybe the final settlement for the Shoah, envisaged since the very founding of the state, in case it feels, or rather, is, existentially threatened. Trump's reasoning - if you want to call it so - is different, yet comparable. A United States in turmoil, and hence geo-politically, and world-economically de-clawed as a super-power, will not tolerate its eternal ally-rival to fare better than itself, even if as it is also heavily challenged by the prevailing disruptions (\*\*).

Where does that leave us? As far as I am concerned, my honest answer is that I simply don't know. I have no survival strategy in store beyond a tentative 'making the best of it', trying to strengthen local ties for survival, and when (if?) everything fails, hope to have the courage for a voluntary exit. ('Embracing the Wild' being also an alternative ...) That leaves me - and now the reader - with two reminiscences.

When I was an adolescent in Amsterdam, say age 17-18, I bandied with a mixed group of high school friends who were getting ever closer together (shared holidays, shared romances, you have it). One day - & remember, this brings us back to the late 1960s - I proposed to them all that we emigrate to Aotearoa, then still known as New Zealand. There was an 'en bloc' rejection to the idea, as it meant cutting off all local social, family, and even cultural/geographical ties - in those days there was no such thing as free telematic communication and an airline ticket to such a distant

place was so expensive as to be pretty much one-way. Now, 50+ years later, Aotearoa has become hypothesised, in case the aforementioned scenarios would come to pass, as the ultimate refuge for a 'civilised life' as we know it. But I have no regret, as I think that this last refuge of the very rich will be very materialisation of the besieged inner city London in 'Children of Men'.

And then finally, for the readers who have noticed the absence of the 'Intervention' scenario: I come to it as last, since it is a rather 'niche' one. It relates to my really (to most people) weird place and state of birth and childhood: the principality of Monaco.

Jan Morris' astonishing, yet little known 2 parts book(let) about the imaginary city state Hav portrays a geographic and political outlier with an extremely diverse population being also a cross-road, if a hidden and mysterious one, of cultures and personages (\*\*). At the end of the first book ('Last Letters from Hav') dark clouds amass at the horizon as it falls victim, in the second book ('Hav of the Myrmidons') of an 'intervention' by powers not named, imposing a 'normalisation' which turns Hav into an exotic, touristically attractive place completely attuned to an authoritarian and hedonistic, money-driven and culturally bland dispensation deliberately reminiscent of present day global neo-liberalism.

Monaco being almost an excess of the latter, I sometimes day-dream of such an 'intervention' scenario in reverse, clipping the wings of its ueber-endowed

resident corporates and VHNWIs (- very high net worth individuals; one inhabitant of Monaco on three is millionaire). Strange dreams aside, in any case, given the above-predicted disruptions, a 'reset' is bound to befall to the postal stamp entity. This will most likely take the form of an informal Russian take-over, already well on its way in terms of demography, and the Prince's alleged close links with the ruling Russian potentate and his plutocratic entourage.

But this was a diversion for almost comic relief. I would now rather like you to revert back to ... the future, and to think seriously about it. Maybe in terms of Rebecca Solnit's last 'Long Read' essay in the Guardian for instance, 'Ten ways to confront the climate crisis without losing hope' (\*\*\*\*). (But then defunct French president général De Gaulle would surely have sighted 'vaste programme' ...

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(\*) This after having been known more or less from the onset in so-called 'diplomatic circles'. It constitutes the most likely reason why nuclear scientist Mordechai Vanunu is still living under such severe restrictions, even after a strictly enforced, very harsh 20 years jail term for 'espionage'. Confirming not the reality of Israel's nuclear

arsenal, but its targets and 'raison d'être' would be extremely threatening to Israel's reputation as 'the only democracy in the Middle East'.

(\*\*) This being a 'strategic consideration' which antedates Trump's first presidency anyway, and accounts for the number of American nuclear warheads being largely superior that would be necessary to bring the former USSR to its knee - even if adding the PRC to this fatal 'equation' ...

(\*\*\*) 'Everybody who was anybody' has, in its pre-'intervention' days, and then stealthily, visited Hav - even Adolf Hitler.

(\*\*\*\*) <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/nov/18/ten-ways-confront-climate-crisis-without-losing-hope-rebecca-solnit-reconstruction-after-covid>