

**“There’s No Going Back, The Shape of the World to Come”**

**By Clinton Watts**

In the lecture : “There’s No Going Back, The Shape of the World to Come.” the speaker, Clinton Watts, talked about how the United States’ (“US”) needs to adapt to the new digital age we live in today.

The US is beset upon from all angles with “enemies” employing the latest cyber tactics, “enemies” being defined as both Nations and Terrorist Groups.

Mr Watts suggested that these “enemies” don't have the ethical constraints that the US is bound by.

As an example in China : data, privacy and spying on its citizens, in my opinion, are not immoral but an aspect of your everyday life.

According to Mr. Watts, the US will not be able to compete against these “enemies” in cyberspace in the future.

It is my opinion that Mr. Watts's opinion of the ethical constraints of the US is incorrect.

The US has always been a global advocate for democracy and individual freedoms. It is those freedoms that have enabled the US to rise to be a global player on the world stage.

In no other country have you seen the innovation and creativity that you can see in the US.

The US represents about thirty-one percent of the global technology market share. Apple Inc, Amazon Inc, and Google Inc have 1.4B, 310M and 1B users respectively. The collective 5 stocks

that comprise “FAANG” (Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix and Google) have a combined market capitalization larger than any other country outside of China and Japan.

While other nations focus on spying and militarizing social media platforms, the US and other developed Nations have been able to focus on ameliorating and creating new technological advancements, enhancing the quality of life of people domestically and abroad.

It is my opinion that as long as the US continues to be the leader in global innovation and creativity, the US will continue to remain in a position of global power and influence.

The USSR and more recently Russia have historically been adversaries to the US.

Today Russia is a shadow of their former self, the only weapon that they seriously pose is their possession of a nuclear program, which, in my opinion, is rendered irrelevant due to the promise of “Mutually Assured Destruction”.

Russia’s population is half that of the US as well as having a GDP that is 1/20th of the US.

China, the other example given by Mr Watts, on the other hand, looks a lot more imposing.

With a population of 1.3 billion and a quoted GDP of \$13 trillion US dollars.

However, from what I have learned this year from reading the “Great Decisions Program” this is not the case.

China’s economy is based around the assembly of manufacturing goods.

When an item is assembled and then exported the entire value of that item goes to the GDP statistic of China, in the modern globalized world we live in today this simply does not take into account, the multinational supply chain used to make every item produced in China today.

For example: with the iPhone, only \$14 of its \$360+ cost to produce comes from Chinese Companies (5%).

Because of examples like the above, the Chinese economy is nowhere near close to overtaking the US. The Net Wealth held by citizens would be a much better metric, which would show a more accurate picture of the difference between the US and China's economic position.

Since the 2000s the US has been at the forefront of technology and innovation and I see no chance of that stopping anytime soon. China and Russia have always copied and adapted US inventions and for this reason, they are always behind the US.

It is for these reasons that I differ from Mr. Watts and hold a more optimistic view of the future where the US will be ahead of these two countries and the World for years to come.