

KCL MA Diplomacy lecture 6 February 2014Nigel Hall - Senior Visiting Research Fellow

Strategy, diplomacy, and international co-operation in the age of uncertainty**Introduction**

It is real pleasure and privilege to be giving this talk for 2 reasons.

First - You are a great audience from a good range of countries and backgrounds undertaking a highly respected masters course at a critical time, one of unprecedented scale and pace of change, opportunities and risks. I very much look forward to our Q&A session and hearing your perspectives.

Second - I began my undergraduate studies here in this department in 1975 at the height Cold War. The Vietnam war had yet to end, the Iranian revolution had yet to happen, Britain was in a mess, it was the sick man of Europe, and - in Northern Ireland - part of the Kingdom was ungovernable. British trend lines were sharply downward, and it would then take ten years and much pain to turn around the economy and UK standing.

13 years ago I took my MA here - just after end of the Cold War when we were basking in the triumph of democracy and capitalism and some thought that we had reached the 'End of History'!

I have been very fortunate and seen the world and our society through more lenses than many:

As a soldier/peacemaker in both national and international modes.

As a Whitehall and Ministry of Defence policy official.

As a diplomat – 7+ years in senior positions in two of the UK's largest cross-government missions in Headquarters United Nations New York, and twice in Headquarters NATO Brussels, at a time when getting defence, diplomacy, and development more joined-up and the "Comprehensive Approach" were all the vogue, and UK exercised a little more influence than she does today.

As a strategic advisor/independent commentator – a sort of 'gamekeeper turned poacher' where free of government employment I have questioned and poked, been published in the FT and other broadsheet papers, Chatham House/RUSI think tank journals, and contributed Defence and Public Administration House of Commons select committee submissions, and done the odd tv and radio news interviews.

I am curious by nature and drawn to trying to join up the dots and get to the truth. I recognise how fortunate we are today in many ways. We are much more prosperous, not in the midst of civil war or bubonic plague, and we do not face invasion from Napoleon or Hitler. But I look back to 1975 and when I started to study many of the topics that you cover on this course, and I am saddened. If not a little angry - because our society, our country, our environment, and our world could, and should, be in much better condition.

We have squandered and missed too many opportunities. There are aspects of our society and international community which I did not expect to feel deeply ashamed about. But I do - my generation has screwed up its priority list. We have some big successes to our credit, sure: end of the Cold War and Soviet Union, many lifted out of poverty, rising prosperity, the internet etc. Nonetheless, I suspect that we could be at a fork in the road historical time. The course of our human development could soon be at stake as the likes of Al Gore, Sir David Attenborough, most climate change experts, Tim Jackson (Economic Reality Check), Paul Gidding (the Earth is Full), Lester Brown (Full Planet, Empty Plates), and others have been saying for some time. Climate change, pollution and environmental damage, deeply flawed economic, political, and social systems are all converging.

We have yet to summon the leadership and mobilisation of effort to make some really big corrections. The slow-burn nature of this convergent constantly morphing global crisis is concealing the urgency of the situation.

Like most, I prefer the glass half-full outlook. I am a genuine optimist in that I dare to believe that if a truly global effort is made, the opportunities can overcome the risks. But after numerous conversations with many experts across many fields, and linking them to my observations and experiences including in some very deprived and conflict-torn parts of the world, I reckon that it will be a close run thing.

There will be more resting on your generation's shoulders than I want. Yet, what a riveting and exciting time to be on planet earth. What motivation and challenges abound. What success and conquest beckon!

Context: The world as it really is

The Chilean biologist Humberto Maturana neatly identified our big problem. He said that "we see the world as we want to see it, rather than as it really is". Einstein famously said that if he had ten minutes to save the world he would spend 9 examining the question and just one minute on the solution. Jim Collins, a top business guru identifies a key distinguishing feature between good and great companies and organisations: the really top notch organisations focus on the brutal and uncomfortable truths.

Brutal truth: Glass half full/empty?

The brutal truth is that it is all too complex and convergent to know yet what it is. With the significant proviso of sufficient global effort, I dare to believe that we can turn things around in time. This will require a new order of bold and strategic change to deliver sustainable environments and more functional and agile political and social systems. This will be difficult because the forces of globalisation and interconnections are clashing with the fracturing of established political and social systems. The potential of disruptive groups and minds using choice scientific breakthroughs and technologies look set to deliver unprecedented power to people and movements opposed to the common good. One can adapt Churchill's famous reference to 'The Few, Battle of Britain fighter pilots in 1940' to 'never in the field of human conflict, has such power been available to so few for such little cost'.

A root problem, of course, is how do you agree on the 'common good' in an age when nations have no hope of successfully addressing many key issues because they truly are global problems?

This age has been described as the 'age of uncertainty'. Every age has experienced its own version of 'good versus evil'. Could this soon apply more than in any previous age because of the scale of potential impacts, I wonder? I recently asked a top top criminal prosecutor of a major city in North America whether in the criminal and justice sector he thought scientific and technological developments favoured the forces of 'good' or 'evil'. He thought the latter.

At the macro level, the good news and the opportunities are myriad. Many are inspiring. Yet, there are some scary flip sides.

Since I was sitting here as an undergraduate billions have been lifted out of poverty and the prediction is that by 2050 three billion people – more than 40% of today's population – will join the middle class (almost all in current developing – emerging market - countries). In UK, the Rowntree Foundation say that pensioner and child poverty is at its lowest level for decades. Good news indeed.

The flip sides are the rising consumption, depletion, and competition for finite food, water and resources. And in UK and elsewhere a growing social inequality and falling social mobility. The Prince's Trust quotes $\frac{3}{4}$ million British youth with no or little hope, one third of whom have contemplated suicide. Read Faisal Islam's excellent book the Default Line and what he says about the new neo-feudalism, inter-generational problems, and the completely broken housing ladder. 60+% youth unemployment and despair across major Europe countries even, as well as much of the rest of the world, are monstrous scandals. Food bank and red cross assistance statistics in Spain and Greece, for example, are shocking. 47 million Americans depend on food stamps today. How will we cope with a global population of 3 more billion people?

Over this same period total numbers killed in wars and civil conflict have reduced significantly. Good news. Some say, old-style nation versus nation war and the utility of military power is finally declining. The flip sides, for example, are several million dead in the DRC over the last 20 years, and a civil war in Syria that trumps most recent conflicts for its brutality and suffering and wider impacts. The Economist and others have majored on worrying similarities in East Asia to pre World War One – the war that would never happen because it was in nobody's interest. Yet, of course, it did happen. The Arms race ramping up in Asia is bad news. So too, are growing Sunni-Shia struggles and Arab revolution trends – combining with familiar rivalries and tensions, the Middle East is as dangerous as ever. Watch the growing divergence between the US and Saudi Arabia for further destabilisation too.

The growth of democratic regimes and marked decline in authoritarian regimes across the world is very good news.

The flip side is that nearly everywhere democracy and its twin – capitalism - are deeply flawed and in urgent need of repair and system-wide up-grades. Voter and citizen disengagement and apathy is widespread. Selfishness is rife and much reducing the efficiency and effectiveness of markets. 'Insurgent' political parties, nationalists and euro-sceptics will produce increasing shocks in Europe. 'Smart' non-violent protest will pose major problems; some experts foresee significant potential violent protest. In today's instant 'all-informed' and just-in-time supply-chain world, civilised society can tip over very quickly indeed. In the Balkans we saw societies with near western european living standards rapidly descend into communal violence. In 2008 after the collapse of Lehman Brothers we came close on several occasions to catastrophic system-wide financial collapse. Where were the shock absorbers?

The power and benefits of the internet are awesome – we take it so much for granted. It has and continues to transform societies and undermine authoritarian and repressive regimes by means of transparency and freedom of expression. It has turbo-charged education, employment, and economic prospects for billions, and become essential in nearly every facet of daily living. On the flip side it makes us vulnerable on unprecedented scale to a range of risks and malevolent forces. Cyber is the new 5th domain of warfare, and cyber crime/terrorism/and hacktivism will cause big shocks and problems. Known IPR thefts from a single company overnight have topped \$1bn; military drones have been hacked and controlled by opponents and some fear the same happening to a civilian airliner in some remote 9/11- style catastrophic attack. It is no wonder that some experts are predicting the 'Balkanisation' of the internet quite soon.

Time prevents me continuing through the other 'good/flip side- bad' key developments. The trends are clear. Unprecedented multiple disruptive revolutions converging across all areas and domains: the continuing advances in computer power, the revolutions across the life sciences, nanotechnology, renewable and carbon-free energy, 3d printing, robotics,

intelligent machines - I could go on – are so very exciting. And in some respects alarming too. Artificial intelligence developments are much in the news right now. Exciting 'yes, but what about the mass unemployment it brings with it – the Economist reckons nearly 50% of traditional jobs will go in this new phase industrial revolution over the next 20 years. What chance of effective safety and control measures across the globe? What chance of the powerful and rich sharing more of the gains?

For years we have been in denial about the really big issues and focused on the urgent issues of the day. Politician and citizen have focused on the short term and secondary issues.

Some time soon – the first half of your careers maybe – collectively we may well wake up to the fact that only urgent, big, bold, radical change offers the chance of orderly life in a world that has already grown by another one billion people this century, that pumps over 90 million tons of carbon pollution into the atmosphere every day, and that will see enormous competition for food, water, and resources, and greater weather and climate emergencies. By 2050 70% of the world's population will be city dwellers – how many precincts of these cities will be 'no go' areas I wonder? David Kilcullen, top conflict expert, in 'Out of the Mountains' writes about the coming age of the urban guerilla and wars in feral cities.

In sum, the 'world as it really is' is galloping into the unknown, with enormous opportunities for sure – the big unknown factor is can we handle the risks, complexities and convergences. Al Gore in his latest book 'The Future' – which I highly recommend - paints the picture of the juggernaut integrated global economy 'Earth Inc', unsustainable economy and population bubbles, and an emerging empowered distributive 'global mind' awakening to this huge crisis. He concludes that the survival of our human civilisation is at stake, and claims that collectively we can make the really big and bold changes required. But it will be a huge ask.

Few would disagree with Gore's six drivers of global change, and there are plenty of commentators who share his stark analysis. There are, of course, some who strongly disagree with him and think that science, and much improved international cooperation will come to the rescue. I noted one critical book review which somewhat grudgingly admitted that if only 10% of what he said was right, then heck it was time to get really serious about it all. I think we should assume the figure is above 10%, and that somehow we need much bolder leadership and change than we are reading in current party political manifestos.

Strategy

We are in such a mess – at global and national levels – because we are lousy at strategy. Incidentally, this applies to many organisations and companies I encounter too.

Strategy is one of those important words that means different things to different people. Here is what I mean by strategy. It is about a vision, direction of travel, and destination.

It is a culture, it requires the right mindset, it is dynamic, it focuses on ends, ways, and means. It constantly re-examines and up-dates the questions. It is the art of joining up the dots and delivering the right outcomes. It is not a policy or plan which are subordinate tools and which focus on outputs.

The current UK government rejects the notion that it needs a national strategy. It considers it would be a waste of bureaucratic effort and maintains that departmental strategies along with cabinet and national security council oversight and coordination is sufficient.

The major reason why it does not produce a national strategy is because it fears it will provide its opponents and critics with powerful ammunition to attack the government. Yet, I have no doubt that had we had the right national strategy, culture and processes, we would not have made such a hash over Iraq and Afghanistan, or consistently under-resourced education, innovation, research and development – the ‘prosperity drivers’, or for so long failed to produce coherent and joined-up energy and environment strategies. Certainly, the sometimes intense in-fighting and obstruction between the FCO/MOD/DFID over our recent military interventions would not have happened had an effective national strategy culture been in place.

If UK has a big problem with joined-up top-level strategy, it is no wonder that the United Nations, NATO, European Union and other major international and regional organisations have experienced greater problems. For years the international community floundered around in the Balkans and in Afghanistan with no joined-up top level strategy because the key players could never agree on the ends, ways, means yet felt that they had to be seen to be doing something. The same applies to many of the United Nations missions I encountered from New York. This inability to do strategy is a large part of the reason why the international system and organisations are so dysfunctional and unable to deliver the required outcomes. Incidentally, coalitions of the willing have fared little or no better.

Diplomacy

I was asked to bring diplomacy to life from my own experience. As a sort of ‘cuckoo in the UK diplomatic nest’ for 7 or so years, some career and professional diplomats may not agree with all that I say!

To those of you considering a diplomatic career – well done you! I have no hesitation in recommending it to you. It is vital, honourable, often exciting, interesting, and varied. You can make a real difference for the wider good. Sometimes too much time goes on formal and ‘must be seen’ representative activities it is true, but out of the limelight and the big top issues in the headlines, much very satisfying important work gets done. I think of, for example, many small steps progressed through various committees and channels which over time and together improved many areas of UN peacekeeping. Patience is important.

Looking across the 194 nations represented in the UN when I was in New York, I could recognise, on occasions, Sir Henry Wotton famous 17th century quote, "An ambassador is an honest gentleman sent to lie abroad for the good of the country". Today, there may be fewer naked lies. Clever drafting and language skills, of course, remain core diplomatic skills. Far too often full truth and honesty do not apply. Multilateral, often lowest-common-denominator compromise negotiation is a messy business.

My career spanned a bipolar world and then, briefly, a period of US hegemony. In this age of uncertainty, we are heading fast towards a multipolar world where the balance of power and influence will get much more complicated. Economic power is certainly heading East fast, but hard and cultural power is not. Indeed, the US will likely remain the dominant power in some key domains for most, possibly, all of your careers. That said, the 'Bombing Syria debacle' when Russia pulled a surprise, was a clear sign that we are post US hegemony.

Diplomacy like most other professions at this time is undergoing a 'disruptive revolution'; instant information and communication, and need for expert/specialist negotiators has reduced the need for the traditional generalists. The balance between ministry and diplomatic post has changed. Less authority is delegated, more decisions are taken in capitals. That said, old traditional diplomacy is not dead – Middle East/Iran for example – and the enabling and in-country contextual signposting role of a good embassy is a very important function. The promotion of trade has risen high up priority lists.

The first law of diplomacy, a recent FCO mandarin quipped, is that "it is not the other side you need to worry about, but your own". Sir Christopher Meyer, UK's Washington ambassador just over 10 years ago, complained that the key UK-US relationship was not run by the FCO but from Downing Street – in his memoirs he recalls just one secure phone conversation on Iraq!

Incidentally, and again taking a multi-national – not just UK perspective – I found that many diplomats had more self-confidence and ego than average. Not surprising perhaps, given the tough and competitive entrance exams, and working life around national representative roles.

Diplomacy is about projecting power and influence. It requires a range of hard and soft skills. Public Diplomacy and competence across the twitter/blogospheres is absolutely key – incidentally the British Council paper 'influence and attraction: the race for attraction and soft power in 21st century' is a good read.

When I was in HQ UN and HQ NATO I was able to contribute to the creation of UK policy and lines - eg on peacekeeping and peace-building issues - and at working levels was in effect a UK barrister in an international court prosecuting the case for my nation. I would advise and on occasions be the author of UK formal positions in eg the UN Security Council or NATO Military Committee (often sitting myself as UK's rep in the MC).

How did I approach my work and allocate my time? What top tips do I have? Here are my top 3: a ruthless constant re-examination of the big questions and priorities and focus on the right work, this is not as easy as it sounds, as it can upset colleagues! You have to ensure you do not become a slave to process and second and third order issues. Second, identify and constantly adjust your key stakeholders list and devote a lot of time nurturing relationships - do not become a slave to your desk and e-communications, walk the corridors and work your network, be persistent to the point of mild irritation when you really need to have a few minutes face to face time. Third, and in order to make a difference, be outcome - not output - focused. It is easy to get a glow from a good paper or spoken intervention in an important committee, but good words rarely make much difference on the ground - eg in the UN African mission that your draft or intervention is all about - unless it shapes and delivers important decisions.

My final tip, if you did not see them, is watch the 3 episodes of Ambassadors – comedy-drama about the spoof British Embassy in mythical country Tazbekistan screened a few months ago on BBC Two. You will probably have the best laugh for days, it is somewhere between ‘Yes, Prime Minister’, ‘The Thick of It’, and ‘Spooks’ and, like all good satire, makes some telling and serious points!

International cooperation

Five years ago I wrote the following in the Financial Times: “Fundamental reform of the major international organisations is an urgent global priority. The whole international system is massively stressed, yet the operational environment will only become more complex. Unprecedented effort will be required to prevent failure. Successful reform of all the major international organisations requires inspirational leadership. It will need member states to engage in unprecedented give-and-take reform. The scale of change needs enormous shifts in vision, political will, bureaucratic effort and considerably more resources”. Five years on, sadly and unsurprisingly, there has been little progress and overall trend lines and outcomes have continued downwards.

There may be different priority orders, but I imagine that most people would agree that these are top global issues requiring international cooperation: climate change, protection of our environment and ecological systems, nuclear weapons and WMD, conflict prevention, energy, pollution, water and food security, availability of key resources and commodities, and the poor and marginalised. We should be seeing significant advances in international cooperation in a majority of these areas.

I’m not sure any of these issues are heading into ‘safe zone’ territory – the ‘ends’. The international ‘ways and means’ are not in place. Most of the major international organisations muddle on much the same as before, few enjoy rising public support or confidence. Please challenge me later on this. I’m very keen to report rising trend lines and indicators, but so far they have remained elusive.

It is a gloomy story. The main reason is increasing complexity. This is not 1945 when the victorious powers were able to shape the international system – to devise the frameworks and write the rules. However much we may despair at the weakness of the UN, short of overwhelming global threat, we could not begin to create a similar organisation today. Fundamental reform of the Security Council still remains long overdue.

‘No one in charge’ is the near universal cry across the international system and in many capitals. The UN is indeed very dysfunctional in its primary role, but then Washington has become worryingly dysfunctional too.

Lord Malloch Brown, former head of UNDP and UN Deputy Secretary General, said how shocked he was to find when he became a minister that nations – in his case UK – actually had far fewer levers of power than he assumed from his UN experience.

The old quip that the UN is ‘a wonderful institution and a lousy organisation’ is spot on. For all the great work undertaken by many outstanding UN peacekeeping personnel, I was shocked by both the member states who contributed far too little, and those who contributed too much, sometimes for ulterior reasons. Corruption has been an ‘elephant in the room’ problem. Personnel selection, equitable distribution of appointments, training, and performance management are much more difficult issues in the UN than in most other organisations - inevitably.

NATO is a shadow of its former self – thank goodness, because it won the Cold War it is fair to say. It remains indispensable. Yes, European nations should be contributing much more, and Libya revealed some serious Alliance problems, but the Afghanistan NATO mission has been instrumental in improving NATO operational procedures and interoperability amongst members and partner nations. The ‘Whither NATO’ question will not go away and it must constantly morph to remain relevant. The Turkey/Greece/Cyprus block and related NATO-EU difficulties must go away someday soon. This log-jam must be cleared to enable a much improved NATO-EU hard-soft power strategic partnership.

The EU is undergoing a very serious wobble – its biggest crisis to-date. The European economic crisis has turned from acute to chronic, but it is joined to an ever-growing political crisis. Marine Le Pen, rising political star in France, reckons the EU will be swept away by internal collapse akin to the end of the Soviet Union. I do not think nor want that to happen. I very much want UK to remain in the EU. But what sort of EU? It has been an enormous force for peace and development. Right now from Kiev to Tehran we see that it has enormous appeal, accession talks with Turkey have just resumed. Yet, as constructed, the Eurozone crisis was inevitable – and it is far from over. A blind and arrogant elite have risked the whole project by recklessly continuing on alienating popular support and undermining fundamental democratic practice and accountability. I want to see UK propose a blue print for a much leaner ‘new model EU’ and demonstrate that we wish to remain top table players.

Whatever happens, I think whether the EU rescues itself and becomes fit for 21st century purpose or not, will be a huge indicator for the prospects for international cooperation. For many of the truly global problems we need global approaches and governance, yet there appear to be zero prospects of this happening. At best, we should pin our hopes on regional bodies. NAFTA has been a success. So fingers crossed for Trans Atlantic and Trans Pacific partnerships and similar start-ups.

Two final thoughts on international cooperation: first, the West may have lost its mojo right now, but I think that the enduring appeal of democratic representative government and rule of law will mean that it will remain a bigger player for longer than some assume; second, an Israel-Palestine breakthrough could be around the corner and that would be an enormous fillip to international peace and future mediation prospects. Perhaps then we could dare to be hopeful about Syria, which has been allowed to fester and grow to become a deeply tragic and very serious global-level crisis with multiple cascading impacts.

To chew on

By way of conclusion, here are some points to chew over.

Values It all comes down to values. If there is no vision and common values it is no wonder that much of the world is not working to the common good. If you have not read them, please read the UN Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I used to carry the former around with me for years, and I challenge you not to be inspired by the latter. We do not need new words. Collectively we just need to do it!

Inequality This is a bigger problem – and scandal – than many people realise. Unless we begin to reverse current trends it will be a major destabiliser and security problem soon in some parts of the world. I am not a Roman Catholic, but three cheers for Pope Francis and some of his ‘apostolic exhortation’ points - ‘idolatry of money’ and ‘the dictatorship of an impersonal economy lacking a truly human purpose’, and that it is not right that economic trickle-down theories, economic growth and free market will eventually deliver justice and inclusivity.

Inter-generational issues We need to work hard to prevent this from becoming a family/society difficult problem. At NHJ we have advocated formal prioritisation of long-term and next generations-first policies, and full employment for all 16-30 year olds, with the state providing safety-net schemes to fill the gap left by markets. The latest naked short-term election winning strategy of continuing to put pensioners first is stoking the problem. The pension triple lock announcement should have been made alongside or after a comparable big announcement that most young would recognise as being genuinely pro-young and next generation.

Pollution/air quality A recent trip to SE Asia has propelled this issue into potential ‘strategic shock’ category for me. I could feel my chest complaining so I did some basic internet research. Pollution in China is hitting the news, of course, but I was surprised to learn that only 1% of the 560 million Chinese city dwellers enjoy air quality considered safe by EU standards. The medical data and evidence is trending towards very serious levels indeed. This is fast becoming a real game-changer as mitigation measures will require huge diversion of resources from other economic activities. This is true for many countries in the region and beyond.

Triple-lock before military intervention: the futility and utility of war

As I ended my military career, Iraq and Afghanistan were major disasters which failed to deliver the outcomes repeatedly promised, and which self-inflicted significant military hard and soft power decline. As I started my career the US was reeling from the relative greater ‘defeat’ (58k US dead), loss of self-esteem and reputation in Vietnam.

Some of the conflicts during my career can be described as ‘necessary and successful wars’ (you will note that I have avoided both ‘good’ and ‘just’ words) eg The Falklands - brave politically, brave militarily, overwhelmingly successful and far beyond just recovering those islands; victory also put an end to military dictatorship in Argentina, it shook Soviet Union misperceptions that UK and maybe NATO and the West had lost its nerve and stomach if it came to a fight. Kosovo, where Serbian aggression was undone without the loss of a single allied soldier, was another success. I spent many a year in the 30 year Northern Ireland campaign which counts as a model successful counter-terrorist campaign. I briefly served in the Oman which was another successful British-led counter-insurgency campaign, and in UN and NATO headquarters was directly involved at policy and strategic levels in major peacemaking and peacekeeping missions. My experience tells me that there is - and probably always will be - a futility to war, but it would be totally wrong to over-state the proposition. Sadly, the utility of war remains a fact. If only we had sent just a couple of battalions to Rwanda that genocide – over 1m dead – would never have happened.

Utility of force and other lessons If you only read one book on military intervention, do read General Sir Rupert Smith’s ‘Utility of Force’. Old-style knock-out war between industrialised societies he says have given way to much messier ‘wars among the people’ in which the military can only be one part of a much larger team effort across all or most government departments, and where success demands agile and savvy mastership of ends, ways, and means and, more than ever before, across the information and media domains.

We must maintain our guard Plato reminds us that “only the dead have seen the end of War” and we cannot assume that today’s globalised economy and cross-ownership and investment will prevent new state on state conflict. The Middle East, India-Pakistan, and North Korea have long been top risks, whilst increasing tensions between China and most

of her neighbours today and some significantly growing defence budgets and capabilities are cause for concern. Religious conflict is increasing at an alarming rate, especially in the Middle East and Africa. Tony Blair has just said that religious extremism looks set to be the defining battle of this century, as political ideology was in the last century. In this getting-more-dangerous world, British defence has been cut too deep.

What should we do?

A frequent question asked is 'so what should we do?' At NHJ we have identified 10 dynamic election manifesto points for UK but which are also applicable elsewhere – non-party political and focused on the long-term. You can find them at www.nhjstrategic.com. In response to a press release covering the ten points, the Guardian asked me to produce a full article on our idea for a radical restructure of Whitehall. It was published on 31 Dec and the Daily Telegraph had a shorter version on 26 December – both can be found on the website.

Finally

I have sought to give you a brutally honest assessment of your world, and where it might be heading during your careers. Some say it is a harsh and depressing picture. I usually respond by reminding that I emphasise the very many exciting opportunities. I am saying that we are galloping into the unknown and cannot be sure as to the net outturn between opportunity and risk. I reckon that I am more positive than many who are in denial, almost fatalistic, and content to muddle on in their own bubble. Plenty of times during the last and previous centuries, of course, we would likely have felt much more depressed by very clear overwhelming dangers that necessitated full national mobilisation. Your world is one of very different opportunities and dangers and timescales. In this age of uncertainty, it may be prudent to be guided by that well known maxim 'Hope for the best, plan for the worst'!

Good luck and thank you.