

**CHINESE NEW YEAR 2020**  
**THE YEAR OF “THE RAT ON THE CROSSBEAM”**  
25 Jan 2020

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**From a promo** I did for this year:

“You have been restive, Rat. **The time for decisions has come.** As you sit on your crossbeam, take the time to contemplate the council of your ancestors. The world has changed and will no longer be the same from this point onwards. Eclipses have signalled a change in the epoch. What a wonderful opportunity for you! You are quite the adventurous soul, after all. The Planet of Tombs, which guards the place of the Ancestors, and the Earth Planet show the way toward a bright future. You have many possibilities of choice, but there is one which you must avoid at all cost – the course that looks backwards. The past is done. The future beckons. You can go left or right, up or down, and forward. But to go backwards leads to ruin. Consider well the path before you and lay the ground to the extent that you can easily pass on your vision and direction to the children and generations to come. **Possible futures might loom large and seem seductive, but adequate precautions will prevent future calamities. A balanced mind is the best assurance of a good outcome.** You must pursue your objectives, though. Clever as you are – Resourceful, Rational Rat – the future will soon be an open book to you. The race is on to secure your place in history, and there will be many with whom you will vie. But rest assured, if you follow the advice of those who came before, and keep your secrets and council close, you can mould the emerging world to your liking. Carpe diem! And congratulations!”

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Gong Hey Fat Choy, Everyone!

**Winds of change:** Yes, it’s that time of year again. 2020 is the Year of the White, or Metal Rat, a.k.a., “The Rat on the Crossbeam”. 2020 will follow upon two monumental years in modern history, which have seen sweeping changes in the shifting structure of world governance and finance. We will outline a bit of that shortly, as this is the main letter for an overview of geopolitics for the year. As the opening paragraph stated, 2020 will be a year dedicated to decision-making for the future. The stakes are high, especially for the masses of people everywhere, as the late stages of the world capitalist system as it has been for the past 40 years begin to creak and break. That is stated with a caveat: We will not ultimately see an end to capitalism, nor will we see a return of communism. There will be a period of adjustments in the immediate years ahead, which will cause a reorganization of governmental structures across the developed world. The East is rising. The

West is finding it must adjust to the reality of the East's rise, and further that it must face the rising internal restiveness that its collective domestic and foreign policies have engendered in a public that no longer sees a viable future for itself and especially for its children.

<b>Hour</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>Year</b>
<b>Stem: 10</b> yin water	<b>Stem: 4</b> yin fire	<b>Stem: 5</b> Yang Earth	<b>Stem: 7</b> Yang Metal
<b>Branch: IV</b> Wood Rabbit <i>Rabbit Leaving the Forest</i>	<b>Branch: IV</b> Wood Rabbit <i>Rabbit Dreaming of the Moon</i>	<b>Branch: III</b> Wood Tiger <i>Tiger Climbs the Mountain</i>	<b>Branch: I</b> Water Rat <i>Rat on the Crossbeam</i>
<b>Combined</b> Metal <i>Bronze Mirror</i>	<b>Combined</b> Fire <i>Fiery Furnace</i>	<b>Combined</b> Earth <i>Ramparts Earth</i>	<b>Combined</b> Earth <i>Earthen Walls</i>

So, before we get to what we see emerging – and it has the capacity to be wonderful – we will parse a bit of the Chinese astrology for this year and take a broader overview of the same. To begin, Chinese astrology in its origins was a tool of the state. It was used in an effort to forecast the outcomes of conflicts and events, as well as the destinies of important people in the realm, primarily the Emperor. Its usage for individuals has only emerged in the last centuries.

**The Four Pillars (*Ba Zi*) system** is the most basic of the methods used in Chinese astrology, and it underpins all the others. This is where we get the names for the Chinese years, which is from the Year Pillar. The color, or element represents the kind of transformation undergone in each of the Four Pillars, and the animal sign represents the stage in transformation, from 1 through 12. Rat years always indicate the commencement of a Chinese Great Year, of 12-years' duration. This in turn, is representative of the Jupiter cycle of 12 years, although the two cycles do not correspond exactly. This year is a Metal year (as in iron, lead, copper. etc.), which has a great significance as we will see, but this Great Year now commencing is not the start of an even greater cycle. Instead, this year marks the 37<sup>th</sup> year in a greater 60-year cycle that began in 1984, the Year of the Wood Rat, or 'Rat on the Roof'. That in turn started the 18<sup>th</sup> cycle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> great epoch (3600 years) since the beginning of Chinese recorded history. For the West in general, the Great Year that started in 1984 marked the beginning of what we know now as 'Thatcherism' and 'Reaganomics', i.e., neoliberal or market capitalism. So, now we begin the 19<sup>th</sup> Great Year of the 2<sup>nd</sup> epoch.

What begins at the start of the 60-year cycle, which in reality is a cycle of social evolution, comes up for examination at the 37<sup>th</sup> year of that cycle, in the Metal Rat year. Metal itself describes a type of transformation which is typified in characteristics such as a vigorous approach to matters, eloquence, and matters of justice and decisiveness – as in cutting discrimination. The latter is particularly true of Yang Metal, which this Rat year signifies. Yang Metal is the sharp sword, which cuts through the crap and gets to the essence of situations very quickly. It is unbending, direct and 'to the point', thinking of swords. Yin Metal, on the other hand, is associated with refined metals, as in jewellery and precious metals, whereas Yang Metal is associated with iron and steel, as in iron will, grim determination, justice at all costs, and on the more negative side, vengeance for wrongdoing. We already see this latter point taking shape in light of recent events, discussed in a

bit. The animal signs that have a natural affinity with Metal are the Monkey (Yang) and the Rooster (Yin). It is the natural element of those two signs, and as such it represents technical skill.

**Metal: Skill in action:** The skill set represented by the Monkey is technical and manual, which gives a high ability in many areas. Monkeys, no matter in what Pillar it is found, give high technical ability, and they love all sorts of tech. For the Rooster, that skill is turned toward writing, oratory, literature and so forth, which leads to the saying, “The pen is mightier than the sword.” When found as the Master Element with the Rat (always Yang), it gives the qualities outlined in the opening paragraph to this letter. The Rat has many of the qualities of Aries and always marks a commencement. It starts a cycle. As such, it is full of possibilities and creative potential. The danger is that ideals may not meet realities, though, as the beginning does not in turn determine the end. Rats are notorious also for not being good with finances. 2008 was a Rat year (start of the Great Recession and the big bank bailouts), as was 1996 (beginning of the Dot-com bubble), 1984 (the Reagan-Thatcher heydays, leading to where we are today), 1972 (prelude to the oil shock of 1973 and the year after [the Nixon shock](#), which set up the petro-dollar) and finally 1960, when ‘Ike’ Eisenhower gave his famous speech about the military-industrial complex (MIC). We didn’t do anything about that then, and we face the consequences of having the MIC now, also with a standing army, as it has placed the American economy deeply in record debt, thus putting the world economy at risk. At the time he gave that speech we were still in the Metal Rat year.

**Nations and the balance of the Elements:** Given this is a Metal Rat year, then, we have to look at the elemental balance between the four pillars to see what the year will entail. The effect overall of the year is represented in the Year Pillar, but the effects will vary according to regions (time zones) due to the Hour Pillar changing, as well as possibly the day. For a balanced chart one would like to see each element have a ‘count’ of 2-3. In the chart above, set for Beijing, the count is fairly even, with Wood and Earth being the strongest, but only slightly. However, the Yang Metal of the year controls the Wood, which is yin in this case, signifying what is called ‘direct wealth’. For China, this is quite good, as it shows that gains will be made by the state this year, provided the rest of the world does not collapse around it.

For the US, the Four Pillars are quite different, with everything changed. The New Year starts at the new moon of Aquarius, in Western terms, and for the US and UK, the day is still in the Year of the Monastic Pig. One might argue that is not the case, that the entire world enters the next year at the new moon of Aquarius for China, the new moon closest to the *li chun* in China, but is that the case? The Chinese solar year starts at the *li chun* (4 Feb), but the name for the Year is taken from the lunar calendar. If we go on the theory that the lunar new year starts at the new moon instead of the day taken for China, then the New Year (2020) started for the US while the year was still the Monastic Pig.

The element count in the chart for the US in that case above is quite telling – an excess of Fire and the weakest element being Metal. And it is Yin Metal at that, coming from the Hour Pillar, which is the Rooster. For people who know Chinese astrology, this is very difficult because Fire controls Metal. Although the Four Pillars starts for the US still in the Pig year, 2020 will not be of benefit to the US. Being excessive, Fire burns away any benefit that may have come from the Metal. Metal is the ‘money element’ of Fire, and the indication here is that the direct resource here for the US will be exhausted very quickly in 2020. The combination also points to two other relationships within the Four Pillars, because there is both Yin and Yang Fire in the US chart for 2020, which is a ‘rob wealth’ combination, indicating financial troubles. The other two relations are ‘indirect wealth’ with Yin Fire controlling Yin Metal, and this describes the general populace. There is opportunity there to think outside the box, to look to the future and to use investment as transformation, or invest in transformation of the society. The second is ‘direct wealth’ with that combination pointing to

‘changing the playing field’, and that comes from grassroots leadership. These relate to the internal state of the US for 2020.

As to the relationship with the Rat year and the world at large for the US, the situation is changed. We will get to why in due course, because this shows in the geopolitics for the coming year. The US, via Washington, will be presenting ‘fire and fury’; will be over the top with its rhetoric and careless of outcomes. For the people and for other nations, the message with Yin Fire to Yang Metal is, “You will comply! Do as I say, not as I do,” as in the ‘need’ to sanction and attack other nations, as well as to censor ‘fake news’ and anti-establishment views, for example. As is the case with the internal status of the US for the year, the people can make the difference for a more peaceful world, but the process will be slow, tedious and full of distractions

For the UK, the situation is again quite different, as it is with the US, with the Year Pillar being the same as for the US, but with a remarkable omission: There is no Metal in the chart. Whereas this is a year of important decisions in the East, for the UK it will be a year of general indecisiveness. Again, this is not hard to see, with Brexit due in a few days and with the Johnson government being ill-prepared for what comes next. Otherwise, there is a perfect balance between all the other elements, at a count of three each.

For the Russian Federation, there again is an interesting case. Russia just squeaks into the Metal Rat year, Moscow time, but the Earth element is the strongest, at a count of four, whereas all the other elements are equal at a count of two each. This again will be discussed below, but it indicates that the Russians will be embarking on bold and expansive plans, and these were outlined in Putin’s speech to the Federal Assembly, equivalent to the State of the Union speech each year in the US. Those plans will be aided by the balance of all the other elements. And, Earth ‘feeds’ Metal, the implication being that this will be a productive year there, with big plans for infrastructure development, care of the environment and raising the poor out of poverty.

**Nations and humanity’s destiny:** The reason that we are talking about these four nations specifically – China, the US, the UK and Russia – is because the immediate destiny of humanity is being shaped by them, especially when it comes to economic policy, which in turn will result in military policy. As we read what follows, it will be most helpful to keep in mind that, given the weakness of the economy and the underpinning political structures in the West as well, a new system *will* be created. It is in process. For the Festival Week for World Servers, I gave a talk in Greece on all such matters, which is now online. [You can see the video here](#) (with Greek translation). The actions of those states aforementioned are also projected into other nations, which results in all the turmoil we are now seeing. That turmoil is the birthing of the new system(s) and the death of the old. In summary, then, before we move on to a review of last year and a look ahead, we have the US, which will be over the top with its bullying and rhetoric and burning itself out, the UK which is in the midst of making a major change in its outlook but which will at the same time be somewhat like a leaf in the breeze, and then Russia and China which will be going along at a more even pace, developing their own societies, with Russia advancing new domestic plans and infrastructure.

**A look back:** Moving on then, what did we see last year and how did it shape up regarding the forecast from the year before? [The forecast from 2018 for 2019](#) was as follows:

- 1) Setbacks for the US and the West in the Caribbean region
- 2) Advances in water transport, such as the [E40 waterway](#), for instance (and [here](#)).
- 3) Troubles in the Far East, largely about trade
- 4) Elevation of conflicts in Africa
- 5) Advances in hypersonic flight (including weapons systems)
- 6) More widespread protests/rebellions in the West

- 7) Moves at lessening corporate power in the West
- 8) Changes to come in China, with economic factors being the catalyst, possibly around Tibet as well.
- 9) Turkey reined back in Syria (and probably Syria regaining all of its territory)
- 10) Possibly some legal move around the rights of children (said by Alice Bailey to be introduced by Russia at some point in the decades after WWII and then be universal)
- 11) The beginnings of reform in the EU

We'll take the above by the numbers and list what happened in relation to them without too much detail. The linked articles at each case will explain.

- 1) Setbacks: the failed coup in Venezuela ([here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)); [Haitian protests](#) against the corrupt American-backed regime; [protests against Hernandez](#) (US-backed) with the migration crisis from Honduras; [a rising revolutionary movement in Columbia](#) against US-backed government policies; [rising protests in Ecuador](#) against IMF (US) economic policies.
- 2) Water transport: Russia and China actively pursuing work on [the Polar Silk Road](#)
- 3) Far East troubles: The China/US trade war, which has now seen the 'trade deal phase I' that is [not really a trade deal](#). South Korea posted its [lowest trade figures in a decade](#). There have been [persistent tensions in trade relations](#) in Asia all around in 2019.
- 4) Conflicts in Africa: [Libya](#). This is the big story in Africa from 2019, and it has Europeans alarmed. [Deepening divides in Cameroon](#). There was a [coup in Sudan](#).
- 5) Hypersonic flight: The only developments there were in [Russia's hypersonic weapons](#) being demonstrated and coming online. China has rolled out one of its own, too.
- 6) Protests in the West: The big story there, which is not in the mainstream news, are the [French general strikes](#) and the still-ongoing *gilet jaunes* protests.
- 7) Moves at lessening corporate power: Not happening – yet.
- 8) Changes to come in China; ([here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)) The main story there was Hong Kong and the ongoing protests there, being agitated by the US and UK primarily. China has yet to clamp down. Tibet has been quite, but the Dalai Lama (see 1<sup>st</sup> link) has forecast changes for China in a few short years. There are no signs otherwise of changes coming for China.
- 9) Turkey reined in: [Operation Peace Spring](#), the Turkish operation stopped dead in its tracks. The Syrians and Russians are [starting to clear Idlib](#) of the terrorists there, who are now being [shipped off in their thousands to Libya](#). Turkey has lost any initiative in Syria and has turned its attentions to Libya and Greece. The [jihadists in Idlib](#) now in Libya are essentially Turkey's mercenary forces.
- 10) Rights of children: The [recent announcement of changes to the Russian constitution](#) and the resignation of its government in order to streamline changes.
- 11) Reform in the EU: This will begin with Brexit, which is now assured with the Johnson government having won a landslide. This will cause deep discourse in the EU, and already has. But there are other reforms, as in lessening the control of the US over EU policy, noted specifically with the Nordstream II gas pipeline and China making inroads in trade and with 5G telephone networks.

In all, the year turned out pretty well according to past precedents, and was related largely to economics and finances, as one would expect in Pig years. The stage has been set for the present year, then. Before we get to past precedents for the Metal Rat years, there are a few points to be made.

**Our immediate concerns:** So, as to what is developing on top of what the Metal Rat commonly confers, we have already had several key events happen, which will dramatically change the face of the Middle East and thus the world at large:

- [The murder of Soleimani](#). Pompeo calls this and other planned assassinations '[the restoration of deterrence](#)'. It will deter no one. What it will do instead is to make it open season on high-level officials from the West travelling in the region, if Pompeo decides to push the gangster-ish policy.

- The Iraqi Parliament voting to expel foreign forces from its soil. This is a story that will be explained in more detail below. It, too, involves gangland-style policy.
- [The reorganization of the Russian parliament](#) and constitution. This signals a landmark point in the evolution of the Russian Federation and will bring an end to Western interference in Russian affairs. [There is a video that explains it quite well](#), as well as other matters Russian. [The new cabinet](#) has won praise within Russia and [among people who know Russia](#), and [scorn in the West](#), as we might expect.

What we see emerging this year in terms of tensions will focus largely around the Middle East, as stated, and upon the outcome of elections in democracies, such as they are. Washington's lack of understanding of the region of Southwest Asia and its people, along with its own sense of exceptionalism and hubris, have caused it to make many missteps, which are in effect [handing the Middle East to Russia and China](#), with the exception of maybe Saudi Arabia. [The Saudis and Washington are too enmeshed](#) with each other for there to be a break in that relationship anytime soon. That relationship is also why we do not see an end to the war in Yemen.

**Why the Middle East is important:** We might wonder why the Middle East is so important to Western (especially American) interests. The short and simple answer comes down to three things: control of the oil, [the way the US dollar is set up](#), and stopping the unification of all of Asia under one huge economic and military umbrella. The latter is why we see such harsh and ridiculous rhetoric about China and Russia, because it is those two nations primarily that are driving the unification of Asia as a response to Western foreign policy. When we say 'Western', it is primarily the NATO countries that are meant. There are many factors as to why the US in particular is trying to prevent Eurasian unification, but this also goes to why the Trump administration in particular is so hostile toward Iran. Iran is the linchpin that would complete that integration and make Iran the regional hegemon. That is also why we see the fabricated story about the Sunni-Shia divide in the Middle East and why it has been fomented – because the predominant oil-producing areas in the region are populated largely by Shia Muslims. The problem is [best summarized as follows](#):

“The problem is that while everyone knows that the 19th and 20th century exploitation of the third world by Western powers was unjust and immoral, this same exploitation continues today. The continuation of this outrageous injustice is the ultimate basis for the differences that exist between Iran and the United States, which will ineluctably continue as long as the US insists on its exploitative practices and as long as it continues to protect its protectorate governments, who only survive against the overwhelming will of the people they rule because of the bullying presence of the US forces that are propping them up in order for them to continue to serve their interests rather than the interests of their peoples. It is a spiritual war [on the part of the Shias] for the establishment of justice and autonomy in the third world.”

Iraq and thuggery: This brings us to what has just happened in Iraq. From the 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet point above, mention was made of [the gangland-style policy toward Iraq](#) and really toward many nations of the world by Washington at the moment. To make the story very concise, The US and NATO forces invaded Iraq in 2003 and destroyed that nation's infrastructure, capturing its oilfields, killing hundreds of thousands of Iraqis in the process. This was supposedly done to remove a dictator (whom we had supported and set up) who had 'threatened' the US with weapons of mass destruction (he didn't, but with which we supplied him) and thereafter illegally occupied the country. The US had an agreement thereafter with Iraq's American-friendly government to rebuild the nation's infrastructure. Washington had reneged, repeatedly, to do so. Iraq thereby turned to China, who readily agreed to do so and agreements were signed. [Trump \(or someone high-up in the administration\) threatened Mahdi](#) (the Iraqi PM) with massive protests if he refused to cancel the agreements with China. He refused. [Protests happened](#). He was warned again, this time with violence. He again refused. Violence happened. He was again warned. He thrice refused. He was then threatened with his life. He resigned, but is now caretaker PM.

The agreements with China still stand. Soleimani and Iraqi General Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis were thereafter assassinated. Instead of dropping the agreements with China, the [Iraqi Parliament voted unanimously \(with some abstentions\) for American and foreign troops to leave Iraq, by 2021](#). Washington refused. Both China and Russia are offering military support to Iraq. This is not reported in the Western media. As a result of the above, Trump has threatened Iraq with withering sanctions if US forces are forced to leave and has told Mahdi that Iraq had to pay for the ‘big, beautiful air base’ that Washington built for them. [They don’t have to pay for it](#). Washington owes them for billions in reconstruction costs. Due to all the preceding and due to US belligerence and continued affronts to Iraqi sovereignty, the [Iraqi Parliament has now voted that the US withdrawal must happen immediately](#).

Attacks will come on US and allied forces from within Iraq until they do finally leave. Those [attacks are already taking place, are increasing in frequency and are being done by Iraqis](#), with domestically-produced weapons. Western civilian interests are already pulling out of Iraq. It will take time, but the immediate effect of the military withdrawal will be the closing of the door to American influence in the region, at least militarily. With no bases in Iraq, the US will be isolated in Syria, where they would soon be leaving, and Israel will have lost its buffer with Iran. This represents a monumental shift in the region. It will put Iran, essentially, in control of the Middle East, side-lines Israel and Saudi Arabia and leaves the door wide open to Russia, China and Eurasian integration. It will not be easy, but it is now on track. This is also why we see Turkey striking out into the Mediterranean and Libya, because it has lost its initiatives in the Levant.

**Israel and anti-Semitism:** And strange as it might sound, the preceding also shows why we see a sudden sharp increase in charges of anti-Semitism and rulings in the West to outlaw anything, like the BDS movement, that paints Israel in a poor light. Why this is so is because the Israelis, being more realistic than Washington in their security assessments, [see what is transpiring in their region, are alarmed](#), and are seeking to shore up their Western support base by any means possible. They are also making overtures and are in back-channel diplomacy with their Sunni Arab neighbors. They are in turn also facing serious demographic and resource issues at home.

We can read many articles and commentaries saying Israel is the driving force behind anti-Iranian sentiments and how Trump is joined at the hip with Netanyahu. However, Israel is secondary to what is happening. The Israeli connection in a sense is a smoke screen. In reality, Israel has been a convenient tool being used by Washington and to a lesser extent by London to push a larger agenda, and as a battering ram to get there. So, let’s lay out the problem squarely and clearly as to why the Middle East (and later Africa) is to be the main battleground in these next few years, and it revolves around Iran and Syria.

**PNAC, dead and gone:** Iran was to be the big prize in the [PNAC doctrine](#) from early in this century, the end of the road in ‘[taking out seven countries in five years](#)’. Afghanistan was the start, and that in itself says quite a bit about the real purpose behind going into that part of the world, given that nation’s border on all of the other ‘Stans and the tiny little corridor in the Hindu Kush that tickles China’s rump in the Xinjiang region – or should we say, pokes at it? That was also the aim of the British with their ill-fated incursion into Afghanistan, in what would come to be known as the ‘[Great Game](#)’ for control of the world’s heartland, as it was called in that scenario. Even then for the British, being in Afghanistan was for them a hedge against what they called Russia expansionism toward India, even though the Russians never had any designs on India. But the real reason Americans are there now has been an effort [to establish a large military presence in the region in order to prevent the integration of the region](#) under the auspices of Russia and China. But it has come at a high price – too high a price – because now we are angling to get out. And without a friendly regime in Iran, the US has no hope of keeping forces in Central Asia. Now even Pakistan

is saying ‘No’ to having its territory used as a staging ground or transport corridor for foreign forces into the region, meaning Western forces. Pakistan has long had a close relationship with China.

**Iran as the catalyst:** With the preceding paragraphs, we have the big picture of why there is so much animosity toward Iran in the West, and in Washington in particular. Iran is too important geopolitically. Whoever controls Iran controls the region, and thus the larger Central Asian region. We see, then, that everything Washington has tried to coerce from nation states in the region has only had blowback and has done the opposite of what the MIC has desired. We would do much better doing business than in making war, but the main business of the US apparently is in making war. And we just keep throwing money at it. It is indeed a very sad and alarming state of affairs, and it is bringing increasing suffering onto the Western public, again particularly in the US, where a large part of the economy is centered around the defense industry. Until that ends, American society will continue to slip. But by the look of things, in light of the events just outlined, the American MIC may come unravelled sooner than we think, and that will be good for everyone. Why would we think that is possible? The answer has come recently.

Since September of last year, the Pentagon and US allies who have bought American missile defense systems have had to reckon with a couple of sobering events – [the Abqaiq-Kahrais attacks](#) that took out a fifth of Saudi oil production, and the recent Iranian attacks against the al-Assad Air Base and another base at Erbil in Iraqi Kurdistan. These were precision strikes, the attackers having full knowledge of what was being hit (meaning inside intelligence about the facilities), and then perhaps the worst part: None of the missiles were shot down/intercepted. The spin machine was in overdrive, but the myths promoted about the failure of Iran to take out any American lives and why [was quickly debunked](#). It wasn’t a failure. The attacks went as planned. The Iranians and Houthis were sending a message, rather than aiming to take lives. They were asymmetric responses to American and Saudi aggression. The strike in Saudi Arabia was done by the Houthis with Iranian technology in their missiles, and the second was by Iran itself.

What the attacks showed was that the expensive American anti-ballistic missile systems were useless against the type of missiles the attackers used, and that all American military installations in the region are thereby defenceless against them. As a result of the Iranian attack, Trump quickly de-escalated, and the Israelis have gone comparatively quiet. So, as stated in the opening paragraph of this letter, for the Americans and Western and Middle Eastern allies, the time for decision has come: Either leave as demanded by the Iraqis and the rest of the Axis of Resistance, or escalate and begin to face the consequences of doing so. And Trump is under considerable pressure to escalate. It will be a very poor decision if he does, and will cost much, as Col. Lawrence Wilkerson terms it, “in lives and treasure”.

**Losing supremacy:** The preceding, taken all together, points to 2020 being the year when the West will probably lose its leverage in the Middle East, if it hasn’t already, along with the Israelis and the Saudis as a result. It will also mean that they also lose the biggest part of their leverage in Central Asia. And now Russia is closing its door to Western leverage with the rework of its government and constitution. This may seem like fantasy and wishful thinking, but people in the know, who actually *know* the Middle East ([here, for instance](#)) and Russia, know what this means. It means that the US is rapidly losing its military supremacy. That will be a good thing for everyone, and is nothing to fear. It means that the US empire will collapse over time, but that in turn does not mean the US will collapse. It means a re-evaluation for the nation along more sensible lines. It also means resources coming back home instead of being wasted in adventurism abroad. What has just been described is important to keep in mind. If there is a sudden escalation and a war, then we know the reasons why. But what is emerging is that there will not be such a war for all the reasons just stated. That is, if sensible people still hold the reins of power in the West.



**Past precedents, the year ahead:** And this brings us to the general indicators for the year, as seen in precedents from previous years. Other recent Metal Rat years were 1960, 1900, 1840 and 1780. We have the following, with a few examples:

- An important election in the US. Presidents elected in Metal Rat years have all died in office. We hope that is not the case this time, or maybe some people will, but it suggests that tensions within the US will be high. Two of those deaths were by assassination.
- Important treaties are signed, and important domestic legislation passed. (Civil Rights Act, Treaty of Waitangi, Panama Canal ceded to the US, Convention of London treaty, Treaty of the Hague, ICJ is founded at the Hague, OPEC is founded, torture banned in France)
- Important financial initiatives are implemented, and crashes occur (the gold standard is implemented, the South Sea bubble and market crash)
- Important rebellions are seen (Boxer rebellion, Gordon riots in England)
- Further setbacks for Turkey and crises in the Mediterranean (Oriental Crisis of 1840, the Damascus affair)

The general tone for Metal Rat years is positive. [Kennedy came into office on a wave of change](#) and tried to undo the CIA a couple of years later. He paid the ultimate price in 1963. But his legacy led to advances in space and legislation for social welfare. The Beatles made their first tour, as a backing group. Jane Goodall began her research into chimpanzee behaviour. The first heart bypass operation was performed. The first weather satellite was launched. The laser was invented and patented. The first zeppelin was launched and the Wright brothers began their glider experiments at Kitty Hawk. The tuned circuit was invented by Marconi, which was the basis for radio. Gamma rays were discovered. The first light bulb was invented, but was commercially unviable. So, we can add to the above, advances in science and tech, particularly around radio, communications, flight, light and space.

In relation to the economic facet of this year, we see the world trying to move away from the US dollar because of the choking sanctions Washington now imposes on any nation who disagrees with their policies. And then we see the effects of the economic system in domestic policies and the growing wealth gap, with parallel cuts to social services (which [will be worse if Trump is re-elected](#) and as we see in France under Macron), with the lapse in safety measures and oversight – [a good example being Boeing Aircraft](#), which is [now facing bankruptcy and breaking up do to its handling of the 737 aircraft debacle](#) – with a weakened economy due to corporations buying back their stocks (hence the stock market bubble we are seeing, and [with Boeing being another good example of that](#)), which only drives up stock prices at the expense of investing in employees and company infrastructure...It's a long list. Then we hear in the US about how great the economy is, when in fact the average American struggles more and more with each passing year. And there are similar stories in many nations.

**A call to action:** So, in closing, if all this sounds dire, negative, and apocalyptic and so forth, is it really? Or is it change that has been in the works for many years? 2020 in the Chinese calendar is a 'double-bright year', meaning the *li chun* for 2020 and 2021 are both within the Metal Rat year. It is in fact a very auspicious indicator and shows that there is greater opportunity presented for anyone who seeks to seize it. We have the opportunity to remake the world, to institute changes that will carry us toward a better future for all in the immediate decades ahead. It will only be a disaster if we give into fear and allow it to become disastrous. We will hear many stories about the 'misadventures', 'aggressions' and 'terrible policies' of nations like Russia, China, Iran and others. That is all a diversion from poor domestic policy. Take it all with a big lump of salt and do your own research if you really want to know what is going on.

Russia has called for a world that turns toward and is guided by the principles outlined in the UN charter. There is [a paragraph from a recent article](#) that bears repeating in that regard:

“For readers who are perhaps rightfully cynical that such organizations as the UN could ever play a truly positive role in world affairs, it is important to recall that **the UN was never intended to have any unilateral authority over nation states, or military power unto itself when it was created in 1945. Its purpose was intended to provide a platform for dialogue where sovereign nation states could harmonize their policies and overcome misunderstanding with the aim of protecting the general welfare of the people of the earth.** Articles 1.3-4 state clearly that the UN’s is designed “to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion and to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.”

**If the United Nations principles as enunciated in its pre-amble and core articles were to ever be followed (just like America’s own admirable constitution): then wars of aggression and regime change would not be possible.**

Article 2.4 directly addresses this saying: “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state”.

Emphases added. The UN was Roosevelt’s vision for the world that had been torn apart by two world wars. It was a noble vision, by a great disciple. Its subjective values still stand, but it will require the active cooperation and adherence by member states, especially nations like the US and the other members of the UN Security Council. *The peoples of the world must enforce this or the vision will never become reality.* We are not impotent when we stand in unity. This is the real choice that faces us in the immediate years ahead if we are to have peace in the world. That peace is coming, but it will not be on the terms of any one nation or bloc. It will be had by the efforts of multitudes of voices, and in the emerging multipolar world. That means goodbye, *Pax Americana*. With that, we bid adieu to the Monastic Pig and another Great Year and look forward to a great year ahead. It will be dynamic, it will be restive, there will be struggle and not without some pain, but we are on course to a peaceful future. Let us stand with courage and determination that peace does come, and that the emerging order benefits all of humanity, instead of the few.

Happy New Year!

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