

## **The Next Chapter**

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(Shortwave broadcast only: Roll 'Simple Gifts' id)

The following program is a production of the North American Service of Radio Alexandria. (Begin domestic broadcast)(Roll open theme, then under for:)

Hello Team Humanity. I'm Roland B. Hunt and you're listening to The Next Chapter. (Theme up, then under for:)

The Next Chapter looks at where we seem to be headed as a species on this little blue planet, do we really want to go there, and what are our options? On today's program we'll consider the critical importance that constitutionalism plays in safeguarding freedom in a modern society. Whether our current civilization continues on without interruption or suffers through a severe cataclysm in the near future, freedom is threatened by those who would to bend the rules of their basic governing document to suit popular passions of the moment. However alluring, it's a temptation that must be resisted at all costs. (pause for stations taking newscast.)

The Next Chapter is about ideas. It's not about any particular religion, or joining some movement or cause, or buying gold coins or land in Belize. But if you want intellectual adventure, if you like trying to answer tough questions and solve tough problems, you've come to the right place. And if you go away from this broadcast without feeling challenged or even annoyed by some of what you've heard then I have failed in my effort to rattle cages and stimulate original thinking.

We live in a dangerous age but also one full of opportunity to advance humankind to our fullest potential. Let's seize that opportunity while we still can.

Before we get started though let's quickly review the ground rules we follow on the Next Chapter. First, we don't do religion on this program. I'm not a theologian and make no claims to be one. And whatever you hear on The Next Chapter has nothing to do with somebody's idea of 'Biblical prophecy'. Spirituality is not the same thing as religion. On The Next Chapter we will from time to time talk about the spiritual dimension of life but we'll leave theology to others. Everyone is welcome here though, whether you're a fundamentalist believer, militant atheist, or anywhere in between.

Second, The Next Chapter doesn't pay much attention to conspiracy theories, Big Foot, UFOs, or who killed JFK. It's all very entertaining but this is a serious program about serious issues. I keep an open mind on these subjects and once in awhile I might touch on them but generally I let George Noory, Alex Jones, and others carry the black briefcase on such matters.

Third, we have no nothing to sell here. No books, no MREs, no gold coins, no land in Central America. We might look at the pros and cons of owning gold, or if you're thinking of moving overseas, what factors you need to consider. But in the end it's up to you to do your own homework and make your own decisions.

Fourth and last, The Next Chapter is neither anti-government nor pro-government. After

living and working for much of my adult life in more than a dozen poor and often war-torn nations, I've come to the conclusion that all governments, ours included, are going to do whatever it takes to keep themselves in power. That's what governments do. What we as individuals do though is up to us, not blind, impersonal historical forces...or men in black.

Unlike our ancient ancestors who lived day to day and had no way to anticipate mega-disasters, now we not only anticipate and plan for them, we humans can and have built vast underground bunkers in many countries that will allow thousands of humans to live underground for years until conditions on the surface improve. The US has them. So do the Russians and the Chinese.

Switzerland reportedly has bunkers that can shelter its entire population of eight million for up to two years. That kind of capability is a game changer but it doesn't alter the reality that our species has come up against some extremely dangerous problems for which we currently appear to have no solutions. Weapons of mass destruction, bioterrorism, and mass unemployment caused by the rise of intelligent machines are just three examples. So if for whatever reason modern civilization does pass into history, there will be survivors. The question is, will those who come after us be able to learn from our mistakes and not repeat them?

The Next Chapter is for the elite but in this case the elite is self selecting. It's anyone who enjoys thinking deeply about serious issues. Some listeners may find some of the subjects we talk about on this broadcast disturbing but you can be sure that elites in governments and private research institutes around the world are also thinking about these issues. Our goal is to bring as many people as possible into the conversation. In a complex technological society we can't hope to meet tomorrow's challenges unless we understand them. (pause for stations carrying a newscast to rejoin)

Our main topic for today is the importance of constitutionalism, that is, popular devotion to following the rules that a society has created for itself. But before I get to that I want to follow up on some comments I have made on earlier programs about the dangers our current civilization faces as technology continues to get further and further out of control.

CRISPR stands for Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats. Behind that obtuse scientific acronym lies possibly the greatest danger to the future of the human species. CRISPR is an easy to use chemical tool for editing and thereby altering the genetic code of any living organisms, including humans.

It is already being used by amateur scientists around the world to tinker at the most fundamental level with nature. The danger for misuse, either accidental or intentional is so great that the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine have convened meetings about it. Even the FBI has gotten involved for fear that terrorists might use it to make a weapon.

While it has many positive uses in the treatment of disease and genetic defects CRISPR could also be misused even if unintentionally. For example it might be used to fight invasions by alien species of fish. The problem is that suddenly eliminating an alien but well established species might impact the ecosystem in unexpected ways and end up causing more harm than good.

The obvious danger, what the intelligence community fears, is that CRISPR could be used to create a deadly virus that would have no antidote or treatment and would spread rapidly around the world, killing hundreds of millions, even billions of humans.

Humanity has suffered through great pandemics throughout history. Something like a quarter of the population of Europe died of bubonic plague back in the 14th century. Today with

jet travel a virus with no obvious immediate symptoms could be spread across the globe in a matter of days or a few weeks and no one would know about it until people began dying like flies.

The death toll from the Spanish flu epidemic of 1918 came to as many as fifty million with some estimates even higher. People would wake up in the morning without showing any symptoms. By sundown they would be dead. And that epidemic was before the advent of air travel.

Now there are those who say we're unlikely to ever see mass death from a global pandemic because at some point carriers of the disease would die before they could spread it. In other words it would in effect burn itself out. The problem with that argument is that a disease could be engineered so as to show no obvious symptoms for a period of weeks or even months. So huge numbers could be fatally infected without realizing it.

Some experts have argued that advanced supercomputers and software would enable scientists to analyse the virus's dna in a matter of hours and create a vaccine within days. Using a biological version of a 3-D printer enough vaccine could be produced to inoculate first responders and within a matter of weeks massive amounts of the vaccine could be manufactured and distributed around the world.

All of which sounds very reassuring except that the terrorists or rogue state that created the virus could have designed it to mutate very rapidly, along the lines of the HIV-AIDS virus. So even if a vaccine could be developed and manufactured very quickly, by the time it was distributed five new variants of the disease would have appeared. The new vaccine would be effective against none of them.

We can always hope that scientists manage to devise some kind of super defense against human created disease pathogens but we can't count on that. Meanwhile it was reported in the British press that a secret briefing paper compiled for the European Parliament warns that ISIS is recruiting scientists to create chemical and biological weapons. Multiple sources are also asserting that components for WMDs have already been smuggled into Europe.

As I have stated repeatedly on these broadcasts, it's only a matter of time before Islamic militants carry out an attack using WMDs, most likely in Europe. The extraordinary terror such weapons can generate will bring political and economic life there to a screeching halt. The questions are when and where the first attack will take place and how quickly the panic will spread to North America and Asia.

The banking and financial sectors of the economy will be the first to go. People will rush to withdraw funds before the banks are closed. Stock markets around the world will drop sharply and many will be closed at least for some days, maybe longer. All international flights will be cancelled within a few hours of the first attack. The deciding factor for whether civilization will survive or collapse is whether or not governments can keep the water flowing out of tap and the supermarkets stocked with food. Fail at either of those and civilization as we have known it will cease to exist. Anarchy will prevail.

I'll talk in more detail about this subject in future broadcasts but for now I encourage you to give some serious thought to how you will react to the use of WMDs in Europe or North America. Panic is the great enemy of both governments and individuals. You'll be much better equipped to weather such a crisis if you've developed a personal plan of action. The bottom line though is that a complex, interconnected, interdependent world will soon be a thing of the past. Decoupling, Decentralization, and local self reliance will be the new watch words. I almost

always speak in terms of probabilities and rarely in terms of certainties but in my opinion the probability of what I have described above is very close to 100%.

We have to face the truth: Our world is changing in ways never before experienced by the human species. We are confronted simultaneously with the Age of weapons of mass destruction and the Age of Intelligent Machines. Even if an attack by terrorists using WMDs takes longer than expected the industrial age is finished.

In the age of intelligent machines, people are no longer needed to make much of anything. Machines can and will do it all. I know this will be provocative but the implication is clear. If you take time to think about it objectively, our conventional ideas about capitalism and socialism are also obsolete.

In a world where computer software can easily and quickly adjust supply to meet demand over a wide range of products and services, questions about the ownership of the means of production and how the forces of the marketplace operate don't become completely irrelevant but they take on a profoundly different character than say in 1790 or 1890 or 1990. And all of this applies regardless of whether our present civilization survives intact for awhile longer or suddenly disintegrates tomorrow from the effects of a global natural cataclysm, or terrorism, or nuclear war. Even in the event a supervolcano or an asteroid strike, there will be survivors. It may take a while but they'll build a new civilization and sooner or later we'll be back to facing the same problems we have today. So we might as well begin thinking about solutions to the twin dangers of WMDs and mass unemployment caused by intelligent machines.

These problems are not just limited to developed regions like North America and Europe. They are affecting the entire globe. Unlike the old Soviet Union, the communist Chinese have successfully built and run a command economy that rivals any capitalist economy in human history. Whether that success can continue indefinitely is very much open to question but there can be no doubt that the economic miracle that is China today casts doubt on many traditional assumptions about the role of private ownership and the ability to make central planning work.

No one can dispute that hundreds of millions of Chinese have been lifted out of poverty in a very short period of time although without the political freedoms we enjoy in the west. Yes, all of this has been accompanied by high levels of corruption, extreme concentrations of wealth in a few hands, and questions about sustainability, but unlike most nations in history, *all* the wealth did not go to a tiny elite. Instead, Chinese leaders were determined to build a modern technological state, with the material fruits of that state enjoyed by a large segment of the population...and by most any measure you select they have succeeded.

So in effect these 'radical socialists' used capitalistic methods to achieve a socialist miracle. The leaders were happy to enrich themselves but also in the process to share that material wealth with the Chinese people. The next and probably more difficult challenge will be to integrate economic prosperity with political freedom.

The Chinese are also confronted with the same problem we have in the West: how to keep their people employed when intelligent machines are taking away even the low wage advantage of Chinese workers. Chinese workers are caught in a vice. Rising wages in recent years have caused manufacturing to move to still lower wage countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam. Meanwhile China itself has become the largest importer of robots.

The result has been rising unemployment as factories around the country shut down, causing riots in the streets as thousands if not millions out of work. Sound familiar? And the Chinese government has reacted predictably by propping up industries like steel production with

still more loans as world demand for steel continues to decline. The end result is hundreds of ghost cities with tall gleaming buildings and no inhabitants.

Some contend that eventually the economy will recover and people will move to these cities but you have to ask yourself if there are fewer and fewer jobs how will Chinese workers acquire the incomes to afford to live there?

My contention is that this only reinforces the idea that all of us as Team Humanity are in this together. Even if machines do replace us in the workplace, we humans will still be needed to create art and music, to take care of the elderly and infirm, to explore the universe, and to search for the inner spiritual truth within each soul. But traditional ideas of supply and demand may no longer work. The same for conventional ideas of international trade.

As machines do almost all the work that humans used to do and as low cost 3D printers mean that just about any society can make whatever it needs without having to rely on huge factories located in some distant land, local self sufficiency and resilience will be the new watch words. This also greatly impacts the ability of a few terrorists to disrupt society on a large scale because the dominoes are in effect moved further and further apart. And that in turn reduces the need for the all surveillance state where the government constantly spies on everyone.

So as Team Humanity we have an exciting and immensely fulfilling age ahead of us, if we can lay aside the obsolete intellectual and emotional baggage of an bygone era and begin to peacefully create a new post-industrial civilization.

Suppose that we could replace that obsolete baggage with one of species consciousness. Then the survival of our species would take center stage and precedence over squabbles about who did what to whom in some bygone age, or who's got the biggest army, the most missiles, and controls the most territory.

Unless and until we can instill a sense of *species consciousness* in both leaders and followers, it seems to me that humanity's chances of survival beyond this level of development are slim. That means that like most other species who arrogantly thought they were so smart, we will have failed to solve the Strangelove Paradox and instead doomed ourselves a primitive and brutish existence at best.

The second concept that I believe will be critical to our future well being is constitutionalism. By that I mean setting up an effective set of rules to govern ourselves and then sticking by those rules no matter how strong the temptation to bend or break them. Historically, constitutions are not new. They've been around a long time. Most have failed to live up to expectations.

A constitution is a society's rule book. Like a team sport for example, if the rules are well thought out and clearly written, they will produce an interesting game worth watching. When the rules of the game start being violated though and when no one steps in to enforce them, that's the end of that game's success. It's the same for constitutions and nations.

The American constitution of 1789 is perhaps the most successful in human history. The reason for that success has been what some have called America's 'worship' of its Constitution. It's not a new idea and it enjoys a lot of credibility among political conservatives but even some liberals like Michael Signer have adopted it. He's made the concept a central part of his book *Demagogue: The Fight to Save Democracy from its Worst Enemies*.

Signer's heroine is Hannah Arendt, a political theorist who fled to America from Nazi Germany and became recognized as one of the great intellects of the 20th century. Her antidote to demagogues and political tyranny was the idea of personal commitment to "constitutionalism,"

that is, a commitment by ordinary people not to a system imposed on them by a government but to *the* Constitution, by which a people creates its own government. According to Hannah Arendt in her book *On Revolution* the key to the success of the American experiment in democracy was the fact that the Constitution came to be 'worshiped'. Summarizing Arendt's ideas Michael Signer writes, "The worship of the Constitution set in motion a great historical wheel. America's body politic absorbed the lessons and dicta into the way we thought and felt about political matters. *We became the Constitution.*"

Lest anyone think this is mere academic hyperbole by a university professor, I personally have witnessed this almost religion-like reverence for the Constitution by Americans of all political persuasions in discussions in bars and mess halls, coffee shops and cafes around the world. I have watched political debates among expats from dozens of countries, from San Salvador to Sarajevo, from Puerto Lempira to Phnom Penh by way of Banjul, Kigali and Manila. To cite their national document as though it were a kind of Bible is a phenomenon unique to Americans.

I have never heard anything remotely similar from any other people, not even the British or the French. Our Constitution is indeed embedded in our national spirit and character. It stands, in the opinion of Arendt and Signer and this commentator, as our single greatest safeguard against demagogues. In that very real sense we Americans truly are an exceptional people.

For Signer the greatest danger to democracy lies in the rise of demagogues. This I believe is not correct. Demagogues are a symptom of a deeper danger. But let's continue with his analysis and see where it leads.

Signer spends six pages defining the term demagogue, making distinctions between a populist and a demagogue and between 'soft' and 'hard' demagogues. There are even 'destructive' and 'beneficial' demagogues. Further, "we shouldn't spend too much energy disputing whether someone 'is' or 'is not' a demagogue" because it "is a 'continuous' rather than a 'binary' variable." [pp. 36-37].

With so many nuances and distinctions pretty soon the term becomes meaningless. So we have Signer describing Pat Buchanan as a failed demagogue [p. 37] even though the author admits Buchanan never met three out of four of his criteria. The only one he did meet was his attempt to fashion himself as a man of the common people. Well, if that is the case why is Buchanan not simply a populist? Why use an admittedly charged word like demagogue?

I am sorry to say that this does not strike me as dispassionate intellectual analysis. Rather it is the kind of loose use of pejorative that characterizes the bias of many on the Left against anyone who does not adhere to their orthodoxy. This kind of intellectual sloppiness and bombast, whether from the Left or Right, cannot be tolerated in a serious discussion of political philosophy.

The second and most serious defect of this book is Signer's identification of the demagogue as the single greatest threat to democracy. Not so. The single greatest threat is corruption and manipulation of the democratic process to the benefit of a small elite. That leads the public to lose faith in the democratic process and it then seeks relief through radical 'extra-constitutional' change.

Loss of faith in the system is what brings demagogues to power and that's what political and economic establishments (the beneficiaries of corruption) fear most. During the recent presidential election many in the media were calling Donald Trump a demagogue. Whether true or not it's obvious that he tapped into a reservoir of anger and discontent among a large segment

of the American populace. The same for Bernie Sanders. That anger and discontent is still very much with us and it will continue to grow until we see some meaningful reform. What might that reform look like? I'll offer some ideas later in the program.

It should come as no surprise that severe economic or political crises bring demagogues to the fore. Hitler and Mussolini come immediately to mind. The Great Depression helped make Huey Long dictator of Louisiana and a potential rival of FDR. Joseph McCarthy's influence peaked during the height of the Red Scare in the 1950s. It's true that McCarthy was ultimately proved to be correct about communist infiltration of the government but his tactics and wild rhetoric, including calling Pres. Eisenhower a communist, so discredited him that elites had a good excuse to dismiss him as a crackpot and never fully investigate his charges.

Signer points to the late Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, Evo Morales in Bolivia, and Fidel Castro in Cuba, as examples of modern day demagogues. Note that every one replaced a regime run by a corrupt power elite that had lost the support of its people.

I am discussing Michael Signer's book in some detail because I think it illustrates how we can get sidetracked on secondary issues and fail to address the really important dangers to democratic government, one of the most important of which is failing to stick to the rules laid down by the Constitution whenever it's not convenient to do so. Today we find those on both the left and the right who would like to stretch or even ignore provisions of the Constitution to further their political agenda.

On the left are those who, however well intentioned, consider the Constitution a 'living document'. Such a pernicious doctrine means that whoever happens to be in power can interpret the Constitution any way they chose in order to satisfy the popular whim of the moment. Yes there has to be some degree of flexibility in interpretation to take into account new developments in society but the fact remains that the Constitution says what it says and the words mean what they mean. For those who don't like what it says, there is a legal way to change it, called the amendment process.

The danger from the right is the unwillingness by self-styled conservatives to admit that legalized corruption is endemic throughout the national political system. How else can you explain those who make excuses in the name of 'free enterprise' for corporate executives to amass vast fortunes while running their companies into bankruptcy and driving millions of responsible Americans into poverty. How else can you explain a slavish belief in so called 'free market forces' which have never existed and never will exist except on the blackboards of college econ classes.

The rise of presidential candidates like Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders is another indicator that support for the existing system is fading. If we are to avoid the appearance of a new and dangerous demagogue in the near future, political elites in this country had better wake up and recognize how extremely corrosive such behavior is to popular support of our political system. The Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street movements were two manifestations of this growing discontent. Almost certainly there will be others.

Now I would not be taking up these issues if they were not fundamental to a successful constitutional democracy, both now or in the future. If you're not going to follow the rules laid down by your basic legal document or if you are going to allow the writing of laws that essentially legalize fraud and deception, it won't take the public long to figure out that the the Constitution has been replaced by the law of the jungle. Then you really do risk a collapse of support for the existing system and a rise of popular support for extra-constitutional action either

by demagogues or by the military.

We've never had military rule in this country and we've grown accustomed to the notion that the military will always obey the politicians. This my friends is a dangerous delusion. The American experience in this regard is virtually unique in world history. It is the exception, not the rule.

Let's take a break and when we come back we'll look more deeply at the critical role a system of effective checks and balances plays in maintaining a constitutional democracy. I'm Roland B. Hunt and you're listening to The Next Chapter, a production of the North American service of Radio Alexandria.

### **Promo - Radio Alexandria**

Feedback is important here at Radio Alexandria so I hope you will take the time to email or write and share your ideas. Did you find yourself agreeing in part and disagreeing in part? Did we make you cheer or did you want to throw some-thing at the radio? The whole point of Radio Alexandria and The Next Chapter is to get people to thinking. Send us an email and tell us your opinions. Please be concise and to the point. We can't respond personally to every email but we with your permission we may include some of your comments and ideas in future broadcasts. You'll only be identified by first name and the name of the state, or province, or region you're writing from.

Radio Alexandria is named after the greatest library in the ancient world, one that was founded several hundred years before the common era. That center of learning was burned to the ground by religious zealots in the fifth century AD so almost all of its books were lost to posterity. Radio Alexandria's mission is to make sure that doesn't happen again. The goal is to spread ideas far and wide across the globe to the remotest village and mountain top, ideas about government, society, and the future of our species on this planet.

As a radio station we can't physically spread the great books of today but we can share the ideas contained within them. Our goal is not to tell listeners what to think but how to think, how to use logic and evidence to make rational decisions about the future drawing upon lessons learned from the past.

We live in a busy world so if you tuned in late or have to leave early you can always listen to today's program as a podcast. Just go to radioalexandria dot net and click on programs. Transcripts of all the programs in The Next Chapter series are also available on the website. Once again the web address is radioalexandria dot net. If you have comments or questions our email address is radioshipalexandria at yahoo dot com. That's radioshipalexandria at yahoo.com.

One more reminder. Radio Alexandria is in the demonstration of concept phase right now. We're distributing our programming domestically on FM and internationally on shortwave radio while we evaluate the feasibility of buying and equipping a radio ship and deploying it to the central Pacific.

If you know something about shortwave you've probably already figured out why we would choose such a location. It has to do with the physics of shortwave broadcasting. Unlike conventional AM or FM radio, a shortwave signal can travel thousands of miles by bouncing off a layer of charged particles in the atmosphere called the ionosphere. The signal may bounce between the earth (or sea) and the ionosphere several times before reaching an audience 5,000 or even 10,000 miles away. Sea water to a shortwave signal is like a polished glass mirror compared to a very dirty windshield. It is a thousand times more reflective than ordinary earth. If you want to put a powerful radio signal into Pacific Rim countries like China and Russia using



medium sized shortwave transmitters there is no better location than the central Pacific.

The reason for putting Radio Alexandria on a ship is safety. Pacific islands may bring to mind swaying palm trees and white sandy beaches but the reality is the Pacific can be a dangerous place, what with volcanoes, typhoons earthquakes, and tsunamis. The place to ride those out is not at anchor in a harbor. A small ship like a converted trawler or lightship can put to sea on short notice and has the endurance to withstand severe punishment on the open ocean.

The programs you hear now are typical of what you will hear if we decide to go ahead with the next phase but first we need to know if there will be enough listeners to justify such a large project. If you have some ideas or suggestions for foundations or other organizations which might fund a project like Radio Alexandria please feel free to share them with us. Also we're accepting donations from listeners so if you would like to support our efforts to build a more enlightened world just go to [radioalexandria dot net](http://radioalexandria.net), click on 'programs', and then the 'donate' button.

Right now our greatest out of pocket expense is paying for airtime. If we had additional funding we could buy more airtime to beam Radio Alexandria into Europe and Russia. The longer term plan is to offer The Next Chapter not only in English but in other languages as well. The goal is not to gettled in the domestic politics of countries. They have to solve their own problems. What we at Radio Alexandria are trying to do is look at issues all modern governments are confronting and see if there might be some common solutions.

Transparency is such an issue. It's one of the best ways to combat political corruption and boost popular confidence in democratic government. There's a major anti-corruption campaign going on in China right now because the current administration understands that they're not going to be able to keep the Mandate of Heaven unless they govern responsibly.

The USA is also suffering from a major lack of public confidence in its political institutions. Polls show that less than ten percent of Americans have a favorable opinion of Congress, largely because of the influence of lobbyists. Most of that could be halted instantly if every single provision of every bill had to have a legislator's name attached to it. No more provisions just magically appearing out of nowhere and slipped into legislation drawn up in conference committee without floor debate.

This problem with transparency in the legislative process is specific to the American system but I'm sure other systems in other nations have similar issues. Perhaps solutions have been tried, some of which worked and others that did not, but these are the kinds of issues we like to explore on Radio Alexandria.

In the coming months we may try some crowd funding to begin raising the money to implement these plans. In the meantime all of you as listeners can do your part by spreading the word. Tell your friends about our website, transcripts, and podcasts. Also the podcasts are available free for rebroadcast on non-commercial stations in the US. If you'd like to see The Next Chapter more widely available in your community tell your local community or public station about us.

If you see something you think your friends would find interesting, copy it off the website and share it with others. Maybe you see something you disagree with. That's fine too. Radio Alexandria is not the source of all truth. We're all about looking *for* the truth, wherever it may be and whether or not it's politically correct.

By the way free Radio Alexandria buttons are now available so if you'd like one just send us your mailing address and we'll get one off to you. You can see a sample on our website

radioalexandria dot net. Just click on 'resources'. The buttons are an experiment so supplies are limited. Our email address once again is radioshipalexandria at yahoo dot com.

If you find value in what we are trying to do and would like to help financially just go to radioalexandria dot net, click on programs and then the donate button. Any financial assistance you chose to make will be gratefully appreciated. Radio Alexandria is radio for the future. (end promo)

We were talking before the break about how Americans seem to almost worship their constitution, often citing it in political debates as though it were a kind of secular bible. Central to the success of the American experiment with democratic government has been a system devised by James Madison more than two centuries ago.

To make a constitutional democracy work you must have a genuinely effective system of checks and balances. James Madison was not the first to conceive of the idea but he was the first to put it into practice in a working constitution. If he were alive today I am sure he would agree that those cannot be checks and balances in name only.

They have to be effective checks and balances that operate to restrain government overreach. So for example we have the secret court created by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, or FISA for short. This is the court which approves almost every request by the government to spy on its citizens, which has made sweeping interpretations of federal law that until now have not been subject external review or appeal, but which many lawyers on both the left and right believe would be ruled unconstitutional if they could be appealed.

And worst of all, according to documents released by NSA leaker Edward Snowden, there have been times when the court ruled against the actions of the government only to be ignored because the court has no way to enforce it's rulings.

Following the Snowden revelations the President appointed a five member panel to study the problem of accountability and make recommendations. Some of those were incorporated into the latest version of the Patriot Act - now called the USA Freedom Act - which passed Congress in 2015.

Under the new law some court decisions can be made public and the court can, if it chooses to, hire an independent legal counsel to review policies and actions by the intelligence agencies and issue an opinion on their constitutionality. Unfortunately if that counsel issues a decision against the government and the FISA court, if the court rejects that opinion the independent counsel cannot appeal it to a higher court. So there's been some reform of the system but we still have quite a ways to go.

The bottom line is that *real* checks and balances on secret government power are still weak. The government can do pretty much whatever it wants, whenever it wants. The way the US judicial system works is that you can't sue the government unless you can show you've been harmed. But if all the evidence is classified you can't get hold of it to present in court so you have no case.

All that changed when Ed Snowden released documents showing that major telephone companies were secretly aiding government snooping on millions of American citizens in this country. Customers of one of the phone companies then had the evidence, they went to federal court and a Federal judge ruled that some of what the NSA had been doing is probably in violation of the Constitution. None of that could have happened without Snowden's revelations.

So yes, there times when things must be kept secret to protect the public from foreign enemies. And yes, it is dangerous for individuals to take it upon themselves to release sensitive

information they judge to be vital to the protection of constitutional rights. But we wouldn't need leakers like Ed Snowden if we had a real system of checks and balances to reign in excessive government overreach which is bound to occur from time to time.

Now I have not the slightest doubt that the people run the NSA are patriotic Americans trying to protect this country from those who would do us great harm if given the opportunity. I can also imagine – although I must emphasize that I do not know this to be the case – that if you were in their position and you had to come to work every day, day after day, month after month, year after year and see all the threats to ordinary Americans posed by fanatical terrorists potentially armed with weapons of mass destruction, you would probably feel deeply frustrated trying to fulfill your duty to protect America while also trying to obey rules crafted for the world of another era.

If you can put yourself in that position I think you will agree that it would be very easy to conclude that the survival of the nation comes first. If we have to bend or sometimes even break rules that are obsolete in the modern world then so be it.

Fine. I get it. But it's a slippery slope. It's also a very unforgiving system. Intelligence professionals can spend a life time tracking down the spies and terrorists who would destroy us but make one mistake or fail to prevent one major terrorist attack and your career could be ruined. So there are powerful incentives to stretch constitutional restraints to the limit until someone or some group in authority orders you to back off.

What current senior military leaders need to ask themselves everyday is this: Are my actions those of a soldier-bureaucrat or those of a soldier statesman. They need to measure themselves against George Washington, and George C. Marshall, and Dwight Eisenhower. Would any of those men - the greatest soldier-statesmen in our history - have opposed responsible and *effective* civilian oversight of the NSA and its operations? I think not.

My point is that we need an independent body that would watch over all government agencies and boards and keep the system honest. My own preference is for a new Government Integrity Agency that would have to have authority to look at anything and everything within every part of the government without exception, including the executive and legislative branches, independent boards and agencies, the Defense Department and the intelligence agencies.

The GIA would be somewhat along the lines of the Government Accountability Office but with much more power and independence. It would have inspectors inside every department, agency and board but those inspectors would report not to the agency where they worked but to the head of the Government Integrity Agency. Even attempting to hide something from the GIA would be considered an act of treason carrying the most dire penalties.

Any finding of misfeasance or malfeasance would be referred for prosecution to a newly reformulated Justice Department that is not part of the executive branch. That way there would be no conflict of interest with a part of the Executive Branch reluctant to investigate itself. There would be no need to garner enough Congressional support for the appointment of a Special Prosecutor.

The newly reformulated Justice Department could either be an independent agency along the lines of the Federal Reserve or it could report to the federal courts. Working out the details of all this is really the job of legal scholars but the desired end result would be a truly effective check on the abuse of executive power. And we need some fundamental reform of the Legislative Branch, reform that would probably require a constitutional amendment. We need to remove the ability of members of Congress to write their own rules of procedure. Otherwise

there will always be loopholes that favor one special interest over another, depending on who made the biggest campaign contributions to key legislators.

The classic case is provisions that are slipped in at the last minute, often in the middle of the night, when a bill is in conference committee. These provisions have never been debated on the floor of the House or Senate and probably would never pass if they were. This is a case where Congress is unlikely to ever reform itself and right now there is no way to force reform on it.

One way to prevent such abuse is to require that all procedural rules have to be submitted to an outside independent body, perhaps the courts, perhaps the new Government Integrity Agency. It's all a part of effective checks and balances, very much in keeping with the intent of the Founding Fathers. Yes, it amounts to an infringement of the idea of separation of powers but sometimes that's required to keep all branches of the government honest.

Is anything like what I have described above likely to happen anytime soon? No, of course not. But that's what the national debate should be focused on.

You know my friends I was watching an episode of 60 Minutes a couple of years ago and saw in that one program two shining examples of devotion to the Constitution. First James Comey, at the time the newly appointed FBI director, said explicitly and in no uncertain terms that no one should trust the government or government officials. The system of checks and balances put in place by the Founding Fathers is there for a reason, he said, and it is to prevent abuse of power.

Comey went on to describe an incident some ten years ago when he served as the Deputy Attorney General under President George W. Bush. This was not long after the 9/11 attacks and a new counter terrorism law had been enacted. The Bush administration had chosen to interpret the new law in a way that Comey believed was clearly in violation of the Constitution. The Administration however needed the Justice Department to approve reauthorization of the law.

Attorney General Ashcroft was in the hospital in intensive care from a near fatal infection. Because of that he had turned over his duties to his deputy. Bush's Chief of Staff Andrew Card came over from the White House to get Comey to sign off on the new authorization. Comey refused.

Bush's advisers were determined to keep the secret program. Card and White House Counsel Gonzalez rushed over to the hospital to try to get the Attorney General's approval. But Comey, sensing their intent, had gotten there first and warned Ashcroft of what they were up to. When they asked him to sign off Ashcroft told them, "I'm no longer in charge of the Justice Department." Beckoning to Comey, he said, "There's the Attorney General." And that was the end of it.

Reporter Scott Pelly said, "So you refused to support the President." To which Comey replied, "No, I took an oath to uphold and support the Constitution."

That, my friends is the kind of person we need to head an agency like the FBI, all the recent controversy over the Clinton emails notwithstanding. But there is more. Later in the broadcast General Michael Hayden was interviewed by Leslie Stahl about the unprecedented pursuit of leakers by the Obama administration. General Hayden served as both Director of the National Security Agency and the CIA. He clearly does not like people leaking government secrets but he also recognizes the need for openness in a democratic society. So he admits he is conflicted. Sometimes it is difficult to find the right balance.

This is a man who rose through the ranks of Air Force intelligence to head two of the most powerful and secretive agencies on earth. We would expect him to be committed to the

importance of secrecy in fighting a nation's enemies. But it's refreshing to also hear him say, and sincerely I believe, that a free society also requires openness.

The Obama administration had been trying to pressure New York Times report James Risen to divulge the names of his sources for an expose on illegal government snooping. In the 60 Minutes interview Hayden defended reporter Risen. "I don't understand why Jim Risen is being pursued," Hayden said. He went on to say that, quote, "The government has to be strong enough to protect me but I don't want it to threaten my liberty."

I'm not sure you would hear words like that from a general and senior intelligence official in very many countries. It's one more example of the power of ideas and ideals in the conduct of human affairs. Civilian control over the military is extremely rare in human history. Let us hope that the ideals of our Founding Fathers will live on the hearts of all, military and civilian alike.

All right, our subject for today is constitutionalism and specifically the idea of checks and balances. There's a widespread feeling in the US today that government is out of control. If you think that's hyperbole then explain these facts: A Gallup poll a while back found that 72%, almost 3 out of 4 of all Americans think Big Government is the greatest threat to the future of the country.

Or consider this: A Washington Post survey conducted soon after the Boston Marathon bombing several years ago posed the question this way: "Which worries you more: that the government will not go far enough to investigate terrorism because of concerns about constitutional rights, or that it will go too far in compromising constitutional rights in order to investigate terrorism?" Nearly half — 48 percent — said they are concerned the government will go too far.

And scariest of all, a Farleigh Dickinson University poll several years ago found that 29 percent of Americans think that *an armed revolution* in order to protect liberties might be necessary in the next few years, with another 5% unsure.

Let me state that again. THIS IS IMPORTANT! Somewhere between a fourth and a third of all Americans now think that an armed revolution may be necessary to protect our rights under the Constitution. These are very disturbing numbers and they bespeak of a citizenry beginning to have profound doubts about its political institutions.

Are you listening, Political Class?!

Humanity is at a turning point. Our long term future could be a bright one, or if we're not careful we could descent into a global dictatorship. Getting though this period is likely to be tough. It's going to require discipline and insight on the part of both leaders and followers.

I'm Roland B. Hunt and you're listening to The Next Chapter, a production of the North American Service of Radio Alexandria.

### **PSA: Shopping for a good shortwave radio**

Many of you are listening to this program as a shortwave broadcast but others are listening to it as a podcast. If you're an internet listener I'd like to encourage you to invest in a portable shortwave receiver. Someday the worldwide web may not be available. Besides there are quite a few shortwave stations broadcasting to North America, many of them with programs you're not likely to hear on the domestic media.

There are a number of good AM-FM-shortwave sets on the market now, many with advanced circuitry only the military would have had just a few years ago. If you've listened much on the shortwave bands you know that it's not like tuning in a standard AM or FM station. Reception conditions can vary greatly even over the span of a few hours or days. That's why

advanced features like PLL, digital tuning, and double conversion are important. They help bring in weak signals and filter out stronger stations on adjacent channels.

As you read customer reviews on the web and are trying to decide between models, be sure to select a radio that is highly rated for sensitivity to weak signals. When it comes to shortwave listening that's probably the single most important criterion.

If you want to listen to ham radio operators you'll need to spend a little more and get a receiver with SSB or single sideband capability. That's a special type of voice transmission pioneered by the hams and now also widely used by military organizations around the world. Without an SSB switch on the radio, the reports and conversations of hundreds of thousands of ham operators around the world will be totally unintelligible.

Someday shortwave radio could be your only source of uncensored news and information. If a state of national emergency is ever declared, all domestic broadcast stations will be under the control of the national government. If you want to hear anything other than the official version of what's going on you'll have to listen to shortwave radio and if you're serious about it you'll want to hear what ham radio operators around the world are reporting.

By the way, besides the radio there are three other important items to buy: some rechargeable batteries of the size that fits your radio, usually double As, a battery charger that can run on 12V, and a solar electric panel that also puts out 12Vs.

Generally I would stick to high capacity name brand batteries. The charger you want will come with a little power supply that plugs into the wall socket in your house and puts out 12 volts DC. You then connect it to the battery charger. A charger of that design will also come with a separate 12 volt cord so you can charge the batteries for your radio either from the cigarette lighter in your vehicle or from the 12 volt solar panel. Keep in mind that many of the chargers sold at discount stores only plug directly into a 115 volt wall socket so you would not be able to use them with a solar panel.

As for a solar electric panel, if you buy the fold-up portable kind expect to pay up to one hundred dollars for a good one. Just be sure it either has or can be fitted with a plug that will mate with your battery charger. Put the whole system together and you'll be connected to the outside world no matter what happens to cell phones, the internet, satellite TV, local broadcast stations, or the power company. Shortwave radio, in the past, in the present, and in the future, your window on the world. (end promo)

Today we've been considering some truly perplexing problems confronting us as humankind, problems like how to control weapons of mass destruction and how will society be structured when intelligent machines do just about all the work.

I'm going to suggest four tools that you may find useful for making sense of today's world. These four tools are based on certain assumptions so you don't have to accept all four. Maybe you'll accept only two out of the four or even only one. The tools are general but I think they nevertheless point us in the right direction toward a clearer understanding of where we are headed and how we might direct our affairs to avoid certain unpleasant outcomes, like the destruction of our species, and even all life on our planet.

The first tool is to think of humans as one intelligent species among many in the universe. This hasn't been proven beyond a shadow of doubt but all the scientific evidence coming in points in that direction. That includes the discovery in the last year or two that at least 40 billion stars in our galaxy alone have planets that are both rocky and could have liquid water.

The second tool for understanding the human condition is that all carbon based species go

through a more or less set pattern of development. There is nothing to guarantee that all life on every planet will reach our level of self aware intelligence but if species are not wiped out by natural forces such as asteroids, gamma ray bursts, and the like, then there's good reason to believe that they will advance in a certain set sequence.

Mammals have to evolve to primates who continue to evolve into hominins. These will acquire the ability to make tools, control fire, develop language, and coordinate their activities with other members of their species. At some point they will shift from being hunter gatherers to producing food far more efficiently through farming. Food surpluses will then allow tasks to become specialized and with labor specialization cities become possible. The written word allows the efficient transmission of complex ideas between generations and eventually the scientific method of understanding the physical world will emerge. That will lead to advancing technology and an industrialized world, and eventually to the Hunt Paradox, the conscious capacity for species self destruction.

The third tool for understanding the human predicament is to accept the fact that advancing technology will lead to intelligent machines that will eventually exceed the intellectual capacity of any carbon based biological system. That means that most of, and possibly all of humanity will be obsolete in terms making things. It's not clear at this point if that obsolescence will include the production of all services of interest to humans. It is also possible that humans may possess certain capabilities that a silicon based intelligence cannot duplicate but this is most definitely a matter of speculation.

Now not every scientist will agree with what I have just outlined but keep in mind that I didn't say that an intelligent species will appear whenever there is biological life. Given the right physical conditions and enough time I believe it is reasonable to accept the above as the normal sequence of events.

The third tool requires one important additional comment. I believe that most conflict in the modern world is tied in one way or another to the fact that fewer and fewer people are needed for much of anything, from making autos to managing dental appointments, to stocking shelves in warehouses, to doing legal research. The crash of 2008 is simply a marker for that obsolescence.

Developed economies around the world from Europe to Japan to America have experienced stagnation because we as a civilization have not come to terms with the fact that in the near future human society will need to be organized very differently. The old industrial model where people go to work everyday to turn out goods and services is finished. The sooner we accept that the sooner we'll be able to create a new society based on developing human instead of economic capital.

The clear and obvious implication of all this is that our current situation is not unique. Other species in other places and times have faced similar challenges.

And now I offer for your consideration the fourth and last tool for understanding our present predicament. It is the Man from Mars concept. If the proverbial man from Mars, or from some other world inhabited by intelligent beings, happened upon our planet and he looked down from his flying saucer circling the Earth, what would he likely deduce?

I suspect he would very quickly conclude that we are in serious danger of destroying ourselves. Our technological prowess far exceeds our ability to manage that prowess responsibly. If we as a species don't devise some very effective controls to prevent deranged individuals from unleashing mass death then we have no chance of advancing to the next stage of development,

which is the conscious control of our genetic destiny.

Of course our extraterrestrial visitor might take pity on us and decide to offer a helping hand. But that's a subject for another day. The purpose of the Man from Mars metaphor is to allow us to better understand our current condition by providing a sense of detachment from human frailties, customs, and biases.

Human society is likely to undergo profound changes in the coming years and decades. We've got some really big problems to solve. Let's get control of them before they control us.

This is our planet and we are it's stewards. Everyone has a part to play in this drama we call life. And that's what Radio Alexandria is all about. You our listeners are the wild cards. Someday history could turn on your knowledge and insight. Until next time think deeply and act wisely. The future is in our hands Team Humanity. Let us embrace it!(Closing theme up full, then under for...)

Annrc: You've been listening to The Next Chapter with your host Roland B. Hunt. A transcript of this broadcast is available at our website 'radioalexandria dot net.

With this broadcast we bring to an end The Next Chapter series on shortwave radio. Financial constraints dictate that for the time being our efforts to build a more enlightened world must be confined to podcasting. For all of you who have listened over the years we thank you for your support. There may come a day when we'll be able to resume over the air broadcasting but for now we wish you and yours good fortune as humanity struggles to meet its greatest challenge. This is Radio Alexandria signing off.

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Definitions of commonly used terms on The Next Chapter:

The Hunt Paradox (sometimes referred to as the Strangelove Paradox) states that the more advanced an intelligent species becomes the more likely it is to destroy itself.

The Hunt Paradigm states that there are quite a few carbon based intelligent species in the universe. After reaching a certain level in their evolution they all go through a similar process of development until the point they encounter the Hunt Paradox. Some find a solution to the paradox and advance to a still higher level. Others do not and destroy themselves.

Note: It is not necessary that the conjecture be true. It is merely a useful mental construct for integrating ideas about evolution with ideas about the rise and fall of civilizations.



- i *Demagogue: The Fight to Save Democracy from its Worst Enemies* by Michael Signer, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 199;
- ii *On Revolution* by Hannah Arendt, New York: Viking, 1965, p. 199-201, 205.