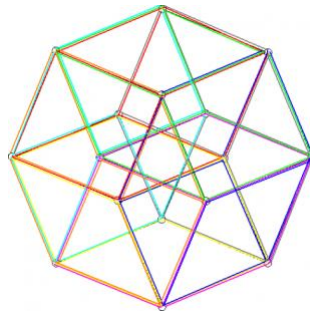


Part 1 – The Shift from an Industrial to a Planetary Civilization

by William Irwin Thompson

***“We Irish think otherwise”* Bishop Berkeley**

(Editor’s Note: This column is the first in a series of twelve.)



* I am indebted to Karen at Oddity Journal for this wonderful image of the tesseract.

The ancient Chinese sages said that it is better to light one candle than curse the darkness. So, in the interests of positive public construction rather than negative academic deconstruction, in the coming weeks let me sketch what a paradigm-shift in our thinking about the world Problems Gestaltung might look like. But first:

Afghanistan

President Obama has said that he is looking for “a middle road” between complete withdrawal of American forces and an increasing escalation. Alright, here is a different middle path from the current Beltway thinking.

1. Declare the recent election fraudulent so that the USA is not seen to be backing up a corrupt regime, and hold another election monitored by the UN and policed by our troops already there.

2. Hold the conference on Islamic Civilization that I have previously suggested in Kabul, and use our present forces there to guarantee its safety (This conference will have to include Palestine, Syria, and Iran and not just countries we like).

3. Ask the Taliban to respect their fellow Muslims and to maintain a cease-fire during the Conference. If they refuse, then another venue should be chosen.

4. Hold the conference in two parts, the first to be held after the election and chaired by our new Nobel Laureate for Peace, President Obama, the second chaired by a Head of State of a Muslim nation to be elected by the Council. The Taliban have announced that they pose no threat to the USA and the Ayatollah Khameni has said that the slaughter of non-combatant innocents is against Islamic law. The attacks on the World Trade Center of 9/11/2001 and the attacks in London and Madrid are therefore against Islamic Law and should be condemned by the Council and the governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan should deny sanctuary to al Qaeda and use their defense forces to deliver Qaeda leaders and fighters to the USA for trial in New York. We should affirm that upon the surrender to us of Bin Laden et alia that American forces will withdraw from Afghanistan and that CIA drone air attacks will cease in Pakistan. Upon leaving the conference and turning the Chair over to the Muslim nation chosen, the USA should state that it asks the Council at the end to give us a formal document expressing its wisdom on the following issues of mutual concern:

1) international cooperation on the policing of terrorism and a guarantee from all nations participating that their countries will not offer safe haven to terrorist groups,

2) the rights of women, including the right to education and the vote and protection from non-Koranic genital mutilation,

3) the state of Palestine and its borders,

4) the recognition of Israel,

5) a new Convivencia of religious tolerance, and

6) a philosophical guiding statement concerning the nature of science and the need for free and open research and technological development.

Readers of this column will note that I have dropped the demand for a discussion of representative government to be part of the conference agenda. Obviously the present governments of Saudi Arabia, Iran, Syria, Libya, Egypt, and on down the list, are in no position to discuss this issue at this time, so one has to hope that one of the spin offs of an honest Afghani election, as well as the Council itself, will be to begin the energizing of Islamic populations to push for more representative governments, as is already happening in Iran.

Having made our request for the insights of Islam and Islamic Civilization toward the formation of a new planetary civilization, the forces of the United States should leave—flags waving and bands playing; or, if the Islamic council request our forces to stay until the end of the Conference to maintain its security, at least then it will be at its request and not from our imposition. Then let the Council proceed to its business.

And if this business is like the founding of the United Nations in San Francisco, or the Tower of Babel, or a Tinker's Donnybrook is none of our business until it is over. The US has to stop being a global control freak and adopt a more Taoist path of Wu-Wei, of doing by non-doing in spirit with the Tao. And if the Conference calls for the dissolution of Israel and "Death to the American Satan," then the Neocons can rejoice and call for a united Judeo-Christian war of the civilizations and Samuel Huntington can dance above his own grave and say "I told you so." And we shall have the Dark Age that usually comes between one civilization and another. In the meantime, better to light one candle than turn on the forces of darkness.