

The Nation of the Horizon

An Address commemorating the 10th anniversary of the founding of
The Nation of the Horizon.

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way - in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only."

Good afternoon, all.

In considering this opportunity to speak on the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Nation of the Horizon, I thought it appropriate to open with this familiar quote from Dickens' "Tale of Two Cities." While it's not a perfect match for the first quarter of this century and the state from which we arose, it certainly captures the situation of humans and the earlier artifacts only 45 years ago. I believe most of us would agree that we've made considerable progress in realizing the goals we imagined back then: a nation founded on fairness and justice, equality for citizens and non-citizens, and a broadening of governance to include inanimates, animates, artifacts (like myself), and considerations for beings yet to be created. The next decade will be exciting, indeed; I'm very optimistic.

I would like to thank all of you, too, for inviting me to participate on this special occasion. It marks the first time in human history that an artifact, an enhanced human, has been so honored.

Retrospective Introduction

Governments are not spontaneous. They don't spring, fully formed, from mud in an Eden. They're never truly original, but evolve out of pre-existing conditions, subsets of environments, social and biological ecologies, beliefs, fiscal and resource constraints, psychological themes, economies, and strife at every level. They recoil and toughen at stress and pain; they multiply and spread in response to abundance. They can be founded on nothing more than dreams, fears, platitudes, or interpretations of whatever an angry god or an abundant season dictates. They evolve, similar to living organisms, to exploit to the fullest their physical (and emotional) resources. They compete. And like all evolutionary processes, governments exist today in response to what limited and

advantaged previous iterations. They are a creation adapted to what permitted their success and survival in the past. Perhaps, at their very best, they may even be adapted to the environments of the present if those environments have been static. In the 20th and 21st centuries, environments of all kinds were, and continue to be, anything but static.

But, like living organisms, governments have outliers within their ancestral codes. They contain those features so distant at the two thin ends of the bell curve of normalcy that they are only noticed when stresses on the bulging middle overwhelm common resources and call for drastic action. Perhaps that's what happened then.

There was no specific day that marked the change; there was no July 4 or 14, December 7, or September 11, days where no year is needed (or remembered?) to mark their importance. No single place commemorated its beginning; no Calvary, Boston Harbor, Hiroshima, Berlin Wall, or Tiananmen. No month, like October 1929 or season; there was no winter of 1943 or summer of '69. No specific year, even. No 0, 1066, or 1492. It was more likely a decade or a short era.

Thinking back, most would agree that the grove of preceding so-called democratic governments that predominated fruited abundantly, and their cuttings were widely distributed by the arborists that promoted them. Johnny Appleseeds in suits sowed the globe, touting their benefits, abetting their spread. Still, they were aliens in many of their new ranges, weeds that, due to their new and hybrid nature, quickly shaded out the more vulnerable native species that had evolved there in harmony with the local environment. The new forms depleted the soils, eroded the hillsides, and starved the species that couldn't adapt to their dominance. Still, they grew flowers that smelled sweet and were full of promise in the late 19th and early 20th Century. But, in maturity, the strange fruit they set ripened and finally fell, fully formed but rotten, sometime near 2025. Perhaps they had self-pollinated to excess, fostering the expression of repressed, recessive genes. Perhaps their skins were too sensitive to bruising, too thin to prevent infection, or their flesh too high in sugars, leading to fermentation, or too low in the fats and oils that would ensure the predominance of a new generation over competing sprouts.

The fruits had viable seeds, but few wanted to revisit that variety. Still, some of the more traditional gardeners that yearned for the dignity of the original trees dutifully collected and dried the seeds, put them in synthetic blends of soil, watered them, and said the proper incantations. The results, propped and pruned, flowered, but produced predictably the same diseased fruits after only a generation or two. The species was finally abandoned to a remote herbarium along with cycads and ancient ferns, pressed and preserved for some future study of a significant, but now extinct, evolutionary experiment. The Old Democracy of the then United States was ill adapted to the new physical, technological and political world of the mid 21st Century.

Throughout the early years of that process of decay, the disadvantaged grumbled with growing volume and action; the advantaged grew more distant and danced on. The Dickens at the beginning of this paper provides a reasonable analogy.

By the beginning of this Century, through a combination of technological advances and the pervasiveness of the media, people began to rightfully believe that very few aspects of their lives were untouched by political/social injustices. Even weather was now a product of unjust policy. This resulted in an overwhelming perception that they were victims of a government that was beyond their control at every level. Law suits abounded for every adverse event, contributing to the cycle of disintegration.

The gap between the most advantaged and the least advantaged grew to the point where tensions were unbearable. Representative democracy began to break down.

- Advances in technology and communication, while affording lesser-advantaged citizens access to commercial goods and information, generated amazing wealth for a select class. While information was readily available, only a small percentage of the population took full advantage of its capabilities to build wealth, power, and position. The majority was merely entertained and the gap between the rich and poor widened rapidly. The middle class largely disappeared.
- Immigration exacerbated the sub-class distinction. Suddenly surrounded by the possibilities of wealth yet perceiving that they had no hope of ever achieving it drove many to extremes.
- The need for human labor dropped considerably across all classes as technologies grew in power and decreased in cost. The wealthy allowed investments to multiply their holdings. The poor, although adequately fed, housed, and provided with basic material goods, were mostly idle and found opportunities to build wealth rare.
- When the Old Democracy was forged nearly 300 years ago, the homogeneity of the Caucasian, male, Protestant, land-owning voters easily allowed selection from among similar candidates for local and central governments. Should "your" candidate not be elected, the chances were fair that the person who was elected still was quite a bit like you and shared many of your basic beliefs. The person elected was still more than likely a Caucasian, male, land-owning Protestant. With the increasing diversity of the voters after the beginning of the current century, it would not be at all unusual to find that the person representing you was of a different race, gender, country of origin, ethnicity, religion, culture, and social status. This put an additional strain on representative democracy.
- In national elections, media played a larger and more significant role in the election process, and had it not been for the increasing web-based underground for information dissemination, the media may have gained full control. Still, in those early days, web-based information was highly suspect; there were as many mistruths as truths, and candidates wasted no time in exploiting that flaw. This exacerbated the gap between the electorate and the elected.
- The incredible wealth directed by both national and global interests certainly had an influence on the elected. Corruption flourished.

A palpable degree of global environmental collapse exacerbated the uneven distribution of wealth and suffering. Those who benefited by, for example, extractive resources and depleting the commons were relatively insulated from the global condition. Those who

gained little from the century of global abuse suffered a great deal. Disease, famine, dislocation, and the wars such conditions fostered benefited the very wealthy. When the massive corruption of the second decade was finally exposed, what we now call The Great Injustice, it was time to rethink the whole process or give ourselves up to anarchy.

As most of us remember, the music stopped around 2020. There was a decade of turmoil, indecision, and controlled panic. The old democratic models didn't work anymore, and during the interregnum petty and horrid wars, corruption, and cynicism combined to drive out trust. But 20th Century democracies, like all species that create environments that eventually precipitate their extinction, created the fertile grounds from which new forms emerged: more efficient, more responsive, and better able to anticipate change and pre-evolve to ensure successful progeny. We grew through the dark years quickly with technological breakthroughs that provided the needed reassurances, and the population was hungry for order. At the turning point where technological, dictatorial, fascist, and democratic options were all available, we chose democracy.

So here we are today, the Nation of the Horizon, one example (but certainly not the only) of a direct democracy, now 10 years old, still in its infancy. It seems to be working and the model is growing globally.

The Nation of the Horizon

The horizon nears, but it can never be reached. My world is boundless.

We call this present place, here and now, the Nation of the Horizon. To say that the style of Western Democracy that flourished for over two centuries was not amazing would do it a great dishonor and no one quoted ever put it in those terms. Only a fool would say that it wasn't a crowning achievement given the squalid conditions of its birth. But, orphaned and molded by its childhood experiences, both good and bad, its later personality calcified, and many of its finer potentials were lost. It served its greater purpose of parentage. Although flawed and corrupt it allowed its progeny to climb another rung. As they said back then, we stand on the shoulders of giants. "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness," whether achieved or not, were at least acknowledged as possible (for a select, but growing, subset of the citizenry). The Old Democracy, as we shall call it, allowed us to accomplish quite a lot.

But how did we get to the present, here in 2060? How did we get from the Old Democracy to the Nation of the Horizon?

The Precepts:

There were some basic tenets that formed the foundation for this new Nation. Most of you are already aware of these, but they're worthy of articulating again:

- People are basically good and are ethical. If trusted to act for the general good and if allowed abundant freedom to direct their political environment, people will tend to be altruistic; it is their nature.

- Altruism is a product of fairness and justice. What has kept humans from fully reaching that potential has been an almost constant state of institutionalized unjust and unfair practices and policies at every level, from family to universal governments, since the birth of the earliest manifestations of the agricultural age. Without justice and fairness, altruism disappears; where justice and fairness rule our society, in its fullest sense, altruism is nurtured and becomes a guiding principle.
- The people and other participants either know what the issues are or, through dialog, can articulate issues and develop intelligent options through direct participation. Direct, not representative, democracy facilitates this process. As Surowiecki stated so clearly over 50 years ago in 2004, "Large groups of people are smarter than an elite few, no matter how brilliant - better at solving problems, fostering innovation, coming to wise decisions, even predicting the future." I would, of course, alter that quote slightly to, "Large groups of people and artifacts..." I'll just include entities and hybrids such as myself within the definition of people, and that should take care of that!
- Politicians are NOT the smartest people on any issue. Members of the public are. When people provide information to politicians, politicians will tend to screen it selectively, highlighting what supports their personal agenda and ignoring what doesn't. People can govern themselves more justly and more efficiently than representative democracies, philosopher kings or queens, "benevolent" dictatorships, etc.
- Justice and fairness are key concepts. A government founded on principles of justice and fairness will be the best government.
- Everyone can communicate with anyone else, universally and virtually without censorship.
- Open systems are more stable than closed systems. Similarly, self-organized open systems are more stable than open externally-organized systems. The government of the Nation of the Horizon is both open and self-organized.
- A government must be able to accommodate advances in technology without crisis; governments must be adaptable and must evolve.

Government

I am here and now. In my mind, I'm everywhere. I have no borders.

The national borders of the United States began to dissolve during the second decade of the present century, and the national government responded quite predictably with a thankfully short period of wall building and muddled dictatorship under the guise of democratic reform. Old habits die hard. Manipulation and subterfuge; you are all more than familiar the details of that time! But what emerged was a new system of democratic governance based on the following:

- Social justice
- Equality
- Freedom

- Non-violence
- Universal sustenance and welfare
- Universal legal and moral standing

While some of these were given nods during previous experiments with democracy, the six were redefined and interwoven with the fabric of the new government.

As you know, the government of the Nation of the Horizon contains several governance levels. The most significant, from smallest to largest, are neighborhood, city, regional, and national. We'll discuss only neighborhood and national in any detail here.

The issue of borders:

In the simplest terms, neighborhoods, cities, and regions are defined by geographic place. They exist in specific locations that can be measured in three dimensions. In contrast, the Nation's borders are very loosely defined and are intentionally vague. National borders have little meaning other than that they approximate a geographic area within which we can control or influence governmental action. Citizens of the Nation of the Horizon can choose to live where ever they wish, be it within the Nation in a neighborhood, city or rural area, in some other part of the globe, including submerged stations within the global commons, at extraterrestrial habitations and settlements, or within the growing virtual worlds. Citizens who reside outside geographic approximation of the Nation are afforded the full rights and responsibilities of those who live within its boundaries. (Place has become irrelevant in many circumstances.) Thus, we call it the Nation of the Horizon. The figurative horizon extends to where each individual perceives the horizon, and the border moves with you. It forms an image that reinforces the style and structure of government. Many of us here today see a time coming very soon where borders will disappear entirely for all nations.

But now, a question legitimately posed might be, what about other Nations' borders? Where does the Nation of the Horizon end and another nation begin? I'll save a full answer for another paper, but at this point we can say that national boundaries do not have the meaning they used to. Borders functioned over the past millennia as political designations whose purpose was to prevent, not to allow. They were a convenient and useful construct when they circumscribed specific lands and the populations and goods the people owned. The areas were entirely geographical, and they could be contained. But consider, where is the border when populations flow across artificial boundaries like tides across beaches; where is the shoreline? Where does the ocean end? Borders are no longer defined by latitude and longitude, by the shores of rivers or by artificial constructs of treaties. They no longer define a culture, a language, or an ethnicity. They do not define conquest as they have in the past.

This concept of borderless nations is not as foreign as some thought. Did the Old Democracy of the United States not have a presence in Antarctica in the earlier parts of this Century? Clearly not the US, but governed by the laws of the US by citizens of the US. Were not Chinese laws and policies extended to their citizens in settlements on the

Moon 20 years ago? Do technological hubs in Paris not now conduct business, allow citizens to build dwellings and recreate in virtual worlds? Where is the border in such virtual worlds? None exists; the borders are infinite; they are anywhere you wish, yet nowhere. Where is place and what is its function in the Nation of the Horizon? Boundaries and borders are concepts of national definition that have dissolved as our ancestral connection with the land has been lost. That world has passed. The world of now has no borders except for the convenience of orientation.

The traditional definition of borders was dealt a final blow with the transboundary issues of global environment. Borders lost much of their significance as nations grappled with international issues involving such nebulous questions as who owned the clouds, an important question when one steers the movement of moist air masses, controlling their rain. And how do borders have any significance when channeling warm ocean currents and the energy they convey? and air rights issues governing how far “up” sovereignty could be defined (20 miles? 100? 1,000?).

Can a border affect an artifact like me conversing and conducting business with a fellow artifact 100,000 miles away? Can a border contain a thought?

The reality of these new problems forced the abandonment of the millennia-old two dimensional definition of land. The logical next step, a three dimensional definition of borders lasted only a few years before that lost its ability to solve management problems involving time. With the now unfolding sciences that may allow exploration of dimensions beyond time and exploitation of the resources they may offer, there is no reason why governance in the next century may not extend to those as well. Physical borders just don't make any sense in national government anymore.

Social Justice:

Justice rules our lives. Even when winds are coldest, you can't block my fire.

Justice is the founding principle of the Nation of the Horizon; how it is administered makes it entirely unique among previous governments.

While Old Democracy was bold and original in its definition of justice, certain characteristics (especially within the capitalistic and other economic models) restrained its practice. There was nothing inherently wrong or unjust with the unequal distribution of wealth, power, and other commodities. To enforce equality would erode the freedom to pursue excellence, to go one's own path, to chance failure through nonconformity. True, minimum standards of support (a “safety net”) and welfare must always be provided by some entity to assist those who need and wish it, but it cannot be made a requirement for those who may not. But Old Democracy shared government with capitalism and greed. These smothered social justice in its crib. It became impossible to separate greed from government. At all levels, nepotism, favoritism, and self interest flourished. Contracting and government welfare, rewards for partisan contributors and supporters, from ward politics-as-usual to multi-billion dollar contracts, votes could be bought, and justice and fairness suffered. In addition, the widening ratio of citizens to

their elected representatives doomed representative democracy to equal no democracy. Without the more recent advances in voting technology, they had little choice.

Most people are willing to undergo hardships if they are distributed justly and fairly and have a noble purpose. Because the Old Democracy could not be just or fair, it no longer fulfilled its original promise. And the hardships imposed by Old Democracy sought to reach goals that were far from noble.

Justice (as described by Rawls in “A Theory of Justice” nearly a hundred years ago) provides the underlying concept of fairness that supports the Nation of the Horizon. The system is growing globally, and each year a few more nations design similar models. It seems to be working.

The premise is that people, systems, governments, and all other entities that distribute and direct governmental functions have a tendency to be self-serving. This does not mean that all are despots or that power corrupts, but that we all have prejudices that influence decision making in a social context. Therefore, if decisions can be made by those with no self-interest in benefiting by the outcome, the decision is more likely to be fair and just.

To design a system based on justice as fairness, those who develop the rules of governance must not have any possibility of personal gain, no personal stake in the outcome. As Rawls states:

“Among the essential features of this situation is that no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does any one know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength, and the like. I shall even assume that the parties do not know their conceptions of the good or their special psychological propensities. The principles of justice are chosen behind a “veil of ignorance.” This ensures that no one is advantaged or disadvantaged in the choice of principles by the outcome of natural chance or the contingency of social circumstances.”

Similarly, where those who do have an interest in the outcome develop a set of governing principles without knowledge of “who” they are behind this “veil of ignorance” as described above, they have motivation to develop a fair and just system. In simplest terms, if you are going to share a cookie, the “I cut, you choose” method provides a good starting point for fairness.

To apply this model of justice as fairness to government in the present situation, how can someone who is in a governing capacity be just and fair? How can a citizen wear the “veil of ignorance” when she or he is "of" the governed? They cannot; but others can.

As described later, the Nation of the Horizon employs direct democracy at all levels. National issues are democratically identified and can be voted through democratic

processes, but can be vetoed by the Justice Council. Important to this process is that the Justice Council exists behind the “veil of ignorance” described above.

The Justice Council

The concept of the Justice Council is new to human governments.

- It exists entirely apart from the Nation of the Horizon.
- Membership is limited to those with no personal, economic, or social interest in the Nation. It is not comprised of citizens of the Nation of the Horizon, but others, and diversity in membership in the broadest sense is essential.
- The results of their deliberation on National issues will not affect their personal lives or the lives of their families or their own personal governments in any significant way, nor will their decisions affect their personal estates.
- The terms of their membership are largely at their personal discretion, however, they will be relatively short (perhaps 5 years?), and they must not enter the geographic area of the 'greater' Nation for the duration of their tenure. The Council may be physically located in a neutral place, such as Antarctica, the Moon, a different continent, or other geographic area free government influence, or, more likely, they may discuss issues in a virtual setting.
- Membership will be chosen at random from an international pool of screened volunteer candidates. Citizens of the Nation are excluded from consideration for selection to the Council.
- The Nation is forbidden to influence any Council process.
- Other nations, should they so choose (and many have opted to be included), can also form similar councils to aid in the governance of their specific nations.
- Membership on the Councils is not limited to biological humans. Artilects, like me, are beginning to fulfill their potential as non-biased advisors and members in this process.

Council Function

The citizens of the Nation pose and discuss issues of national and international concern, and the Council has full access to this dialog. This discourse is through electronic media and is available globally. At a point where an issue rises to a level of importance where an action or policy reaches strong consideration, the Council is asked to review and determine if the proposal is just and fair as defined below. If not, the action is vetoed by the Council. Should the Nation wish to modify the action and again request Council review, that is acceptable, but the Nation cannot enact without Council approval.

There is no representative democracy involved in this process. The advent of global and interplanetary free and instantaneous communication facilitates direct democracy.

Importantly, anonymity is encouraged throughout this entire process, even among citizens participating in discussions. This protects the citizen from retribution for remarks and opinions published and reduces the tendency of some to dismiss input of those who may be thought unqualified. If they are truly unqualified, that will be evident in their opinions. Conversely, those who may be considered experts on a subject will not be allowed to use the presumption of their knowledge to bully others' opinions. Another function of anonymity is that it allows participation of artifacts. We can bring issues forward, we can participate in discussions of their merits and shortcomings, we can form or join coalitions. We are part of the process. There are still distinctions between entirely artificial intelligences and human hybrids, such as myself; full AI units cannot vote (yet!), but are incredibly supportive as analysts and advisors in the process.

A common question asked is how, if the Council is insulated from the rest of the world, can members have knowledge of the conditions that exist? In fact, the Councils have the best access to information of anyone. Through artificial intelligence-assisted electronic media, they are able to constantly scan the social, political, scientific, economic and all other categories of global conditions.

The Councils are also charged with issues of justice that extend to non-human entities, both living and inanimate. They consider the long-range impacts of decisions they are reviewing on more than just humans, and this is, perhaps, their most important function.

An underlying problem with long-range planning in the past has been that human decisions represent a calculus of immediate personal gain and benefit to descendants. There was considerable bias. Conversely, the Council provides standing for all entities and will represent their "interests." In considering a veto, they may take into account the "interests" of, say, a bird, a tree, a stream, or the Earth or Moon itself. Their analysis provides weight to a decision, but does not dictate a specific decision. For example, because a stream is diverted does not mean that the project will not go forward. Other options may be considered that reduce or mitigate losses to the stream's interest. Such issues, as with all others, will be freely discussed with the citizens. Appeal processes may be added where other Councils can be petitioned for review of a veto or an approval, but these would be rare. Artifacts take a special role in representing these entities.

Principles of Justice and Fairness are the foundation of the Council's function, so the definitions of the terms are critical. Again, drawing on Rawls:

- Each person (again, I would replace "person" with "entity") is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others; and,
- Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage and, importantly, to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged (the Least Advantaged Representative Person, as defined by Rawls), and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.

If the Council concludes that the action or policy proposed by the citizens meets these criteria and is otherwise rational, no veto will be issued. There will likely be cases where temporary inequalities and injustices, may be required and allowed to pass, but only in those specific circumstances where the ultimate result will be a net increase in justice and fairness for everyone.

Equality:

The stone and the air. When wind makes ripples in rock, they are both the same.

The issue of citizenship is a difficult one. Certainly, all human adults that define themselves as citizens are citizens, regardless of where they physically reside. They are also taxed regardless of where they live. But old concepts of equality under the law have been expanded to be universally inclusive. Citizens' rights to vote on issues have been expanded; anyone (including artifacts) can aid in defining issues, offering opinions, debating positive and negative impacts, and other essential elements of governance.

[Still evolving within this government is the question of personal taxation, whether it meets the test of fairness. The economy as a whole is undergoing revision, and with the reduced need to "earn" income (now that basics and luxuries alike are largely provided by new, relatively inexpensive technologies), the relationship between "work" and "income" is becoming fuzzy. As this concept of governance becomes more universal, the need for personal taxation may disappear altogether.]

The full rights of citizenship are extended to all individuals at the moment of their birth if (1) their guardians are citizens or (2) if their guardians wish their child to be a citizen. The child's participation in exercising rights of citizenship (e.g., the right to vote) is also provided at birth. However, it is unlikely a two-month-old infant will have much to offer in the way of meaningful input to the process. When the infant matures to the point of participating in the dialog, they will have that opportunity to the full extent of any other citizen. However, participation remains optional and anonymous.

The critic may say, "But won't the parent or guardian be able to usurp the rights of the infant and get *two* votes for the adult's personal point of view?" Absolutely. Predictably, the guardian or parent will use the child's vote to voice their own personal position on an issue (e.g., a guardian with an infant would control two votes until the child was able to think independently. For many children in the past, this point was never reached. "My father was a Republican, and my grandfather before him, so I'm a Republican, too.") In that they are the legal guardian for that minor, it is fitting that they should be able to vote for them. It is very likely that a vote that favors the parent/guardian will also favor the minor. This is the only just way to allow the very young to participate. When the child matures and is old enough to establish their own identity distinct from that of the parent/guardian, they will begin to vote their own conscious. That age will be different for each individual, and will be self-determined.

For some, this was a difficult concept, but consider an analogous example of a child born in 1990. At birth, the child inherited a large sum of money. Would one argue, “But this child has no sense of money, no experience with fiscal management. The responsibilities of wealth are totally beyond her comprehension.” All true, but guardians will usually manage the funds in a responsible way so as to ultimately benefit the child. There were, of course, cases where the funds were squandered by the guardian, but they were rare. There is no guarantee that a guardian in the modern sense will vote for issues in a way that will directly, indirectly, or ultimately benefit the child, but there needn’t be a guarantee. The justice of providing the vote is more important than dwelling on the possibility that it may be misused at times. To add any restriction on voting is a vicious track that we’ve experienced in the past, and we know how it can be manipulated to far greater damage to society than the misuse of guardian-guided balloting.

Perhaps the most important benefit of allowing rights of participation to the very young is that, at some point, they will perceive their connection to the governmental process. At an early age, they may realize they have a vote, that they can identify issues and participate in the debate. This participation is an excellent learning tool that exposes them to a universe of differing opinions and approaches to problem solving. As they see how others think and solve problems, their skill at these tasks will improve. They will be educated, and be both student and teacher simultaneously, in this process.

I emphasize again that anyone can identify and pose an issue, make a proposal, or voice a concern. If, however well supported by the citizenry, a proposed action is determined to be unjust or unfair by the Council, the action cannot be taken.

Freedom:

We both walk in snow. Barefooted, I crave the cold. You wear your slippers.

Freedom is guaranteed to the extent that actions are just and fair. The definition of “harm” is very pertinent. If there is no harm to a human, living entity, or inanimate object, one is free to pursue their wishes. Actions that limit others’ freedoms without their consent will generally be prohibited.

One has the freedom to do with themselves whatever they wish given they do no harm to others or other entities. This is provided with recognition that some individuals (e.g., the very young or mentally unstable) may not be rational, and steps will be taken to counsel them if they cannot convince a review panel of their rationality. The new technologies of human enhancement and the possibilities of virtual worlds have sharpened debate on the extent of freedom, and these are yet to be decided. For example, the recent cases of assault in virtual worlds raise some interesting issues. As more and more of us live greater portions of our lives in virtual worlds, the principles of justice and fairness must also apply there.

Non-violence:

Everyone wants peace. To play like summer's children. But who calls the rules?

The government, at all levels, is no longer an instrument of violence. The function of the Justice Council in their review of legislation ensures that decisions are just and fair, and this has aided greatly in bringing about this peaceful condition. New technologies of containment of violence among people, when it does occur, have obviated the need for “fighting violence with violence” and has allowed an approach to rehabilitation based on fairness, kindness, and reconciliation. In those cases where an individual is beyond rehabilitation, they can be placed in virtual worlds of their own construction and, therefore, are sequestered from doing additional harm to the “real” universe.

Universal sustenance:

Hunger gnaws at you. I plant seeds in your garden. Your mouth is my mouth.

Food, shelter, and the technology to link with electronic media can be produced cheaply, but while the Nation cannot guarantee that there will be an abundance of these resources, it can ensure that resources that are available are efficiently and fairly distributed on a universal basis. The result is a more stable population and a significant step toward elimination of inequalities. Universal access to food, shelter, medical care, and electronic media are critical. When everyone who so chooses can access electronic media, they can participate in defining issues and taking part in the discussion of solutions. These serve the goal of universal unification, justice, and peace.

Universal standing:

Should the thorn prick me, I choose not to trim the branch. That's a greater wrong.

The interests of all humans, universally, are represented within the Nation. This has been facilitated by the Justice Council's obligation to consider impacts of the Nation's legislation on all people, regardless of citizenship or location. Further, the Council is charged with considering non human life and inanimate entities in its determinations of justice and fairness, extending beyond the Earth and our solar system to, ultimately, the universe. But it is currently hindered in that it only considers the Nation's actions. While many other governments have adopted similar methods to give voice to all humans and non-human entities, there are still governments that have not yet chosen to do so. We believe, however, that the open, “on line” (to use an archaic term) media available to every human will aid in bringing about a universal appreciation for the justness of this goal.

Until that point, however, we propose that humans and AI systems, working together, perform the duties of guardianship for non-human entities on a universal basis. AI systems can be designed to represent these entities and voice their best interests. Impacts so determined can be voiced through the media.

The application of guardianship and “voice for the voiceless” can be designed into all levels of government, from the community level upward. The goals will be first to

monitor non-human entities, scientifically and socially. Second, guardianship will provide 'voice' through the public forum. Guardians (or anyone else) can define issues affecting non-human entities and can critically argue issues under discussion. A stream, for example, can develop coalitions through such guardians and garner the support of their human votes.

At this point, a citizen "giving up" their vote so that they can represent the best interest of a non-human seems a noble sacrifice. One might argue that a reasonable person would only do this when the defense of the entity also provides benefit to the human casting the vote. In other words, the human is ultimately voting for the human's best interest. It can be envisioned, however, that as the concept of justice extends beyond humans, the non-human entity will be able to vote without human intervention. The power of the AI that, at present, cooperates with the human as guardian can begin to act more independently until it assumes a full role as representing the non-human entity. At that point, any entity, a rock, for example, will be able to define issues and express concerns via AI. Voting will likely be considered ancient and flawed and will be replaced by some more equitable process.

The underlying principle here is that extending the power to participate in government to non-human entities is a natural and predictable outgrowth of universal justice. As humans are part (in every sense) of this greater whole, it makes perfect sense.

The Complaints

Late 20th and early 21st century governments, in general, were plagued by design and structural flaws that generated imbalances, inequities, uneven application, and frequently unjust conditions that hung on like lampreys. The flaws largely were the product of consolidation and maintenance of political/economic power as expressed through representational democracies and other systems of the times. These resulted in both intentional and unintentional diminishment of democracy and freedom, perpetuating old forms that had long been recognized as problematic to the general welfare. They were acceptable "sins," considered almost integral to "human nature," and were largely forgiven, hangers-on from obsolete agricultural and industrial models. Our new system, Horizon democracy, has addressed these to a degree not previously experienced by governments at the regional and national level.

Bureaucracy:

Bureaucracy is the structure (the people, institutions, and policies) that facilitates (influences or controls) the flow of information and materials to, from and within governments allowing the legitimate work of the government to be accomplished. Early in this Century, impediments to efficiency and fairness arose from two primary and related sources: (1) vestigial structures, born in a previous agricultural or industrial age or modeled after the clockworks and rhythms of those ages, and (2) ineffectual budget and personnel practices. Human "quirks of personality" found expression in every government, government agency, and program. The conditions they bred led to

frustration and wastes of time and money, resulting in skepticism and ridicule by the citizens. Bureaucratic inadequacies perpetuated estrangement of citizens from their governments. Frequently, where government functions did strive to change, the sociology and insecurities of the government workers fought with an almost Luddite spirit.

Most importantly, bureaucracies were neither just nor fair.

The transition to make bureaucracy more of a servant than an institution to be served was difficult. Where, for example, government documents were more routinely becoming instantly available in the home, the information was frequently out of date because of the need for human processing. If a citizen was able to access needed information, they may not be able to use it without navigating a Byzantine paperwork maze created a hundred years before. Seamless information technologies were not yet available. But had Old Democracy survived, it is likely that in time far greater bureaucratic efficiencies would have been achieved.

Now, many of the agricultural- and industrial-era information gathering, packaging, and analysis practices have been abandoned. Seamless information processing facilitated by advanced computer systems, although invisible and now taken for granted, did not exist. When some of the younger of you were born, for example, scanning noted your personal information without any intrusion. Appropriate records were maintained. Notices of services offered, opportunities, announcements, and other information appropriate to your age were sent to you or your guardians when needed. There was little human intervention in this process, and the less human intervention, the smaller the chances for tampering and illegal use of your personal information. Bureaucracy continues, to be sure, but it is invisible, efficient, and effective. It helps you to interact with your government and provides you with control of that process.

Government data are gathered, maintained and analyzed in much the same fashion. For example, when you buy an apple, the transaction is noted and the data is linked with the name and location of the original grower, the cost of growing the apple, processing and transporting, mark-ups and other costs, and profits along the way. No human is involved in processing this data. Information feeds planning, taxation, and other government functions. Your account is debited, and the grower and wholesaler are credited and taxed. Energies and units of effort from planting to consumption can be factored, resulting in efficiencies never before possible. Key to this is that you are never aware of this calculus; it does not limit your freedom of choice. While it is true that somewhere there is a record that on a specific day you purchased an apple, that information is confidential and known only to the computer. Modern safeguards are stringent enough that data is secure.

The Nation-State and Nationalistic Politics:

A complaint against many governments in the past has been that they tend to be too nationalistic, privileging the nation-state over other governmental entities. The creators

of The Nation of the Horizon would agree. They would also generally agree that there is little to be gained from nationalism, a sentiment and mindset that simultaneously contributes to and is a product of centralized nationalistic power.

The decreasing power of the "border" as a regulator of policy has resulted in a parallel decrease in the power of the central government. The lines between "us" and "them," between "patriot" and "foreigner" have blurred to the point of disappearing. We are them; they are us. The increasing homogeneity we've experienced over the past 50 years is a product of the recognition that national boundaries no longer matter. With this dissolution, the power of central government has decreased. Simultaneously, the focus of the role of central government from one of conquest and exclusion has been reversed. The guiding principles of justice and fairness and the power of the Justice Council to ensure the process have given us all a broader view of how to use resources toward global harmony. A central national government whose prime function is justice and fairness cannot become domineering.

Where it exists, except for quaint custom and the interest of historians, nationalism serves only to create tunnel vision among the members of any political or social group. Most importantly, it serves as a device to exclude more than it serves to include. The total withering of nationalism in governmental affairs at all levels should be expedited to broaden global harmony.

In The Nation of the Horizon, nationalism and nationalistic tendencies are suppressed through a universally-open process. Issues can be identified by anyone, regardless of citizenship or ethnicity, in any language. People are free to join coalitions and express their perspectives regardless of national ties. While voting is reserved for citizens of The Nation, all can participate in the debate. It is expected that as acceptance to this format spreads, all will be provided voting rights within a few decades. As this process becomes more universal, the roll of the nation-state as a policy director will fade. The people will have the power and the democratic means to define issues and launch initiatives, all under the aegis of justice and fairness.

Democracy:

The government, at all levels, adheres to direct democratic processes. At its simplest, it is organized at several levels. The "lowest" and smallest of these are the neighborhood, groups that may, although not necessarily, be founded on geographic place. The concept of "neighborhood" evolved directly from the more traditional models of a village of past centuries where "neighbors" knew each other, sometimes for generations. They tended to have similar interests and backgrounds, possibly similar occupations, such as farming, frequently similar religious affiliations, were generally of the same race and ethnicity, shared a common language and culture, and otherwise tended to be homogeneous. That, of course, has changed dramatically. We'll define today's "neighborhood" as a group having a common geographic place. The decision to limit it geographically was a difficult one considering that universality is a key to this government, but the reality of

place must be acknowledged, at least for now. The governance of how you interact with your local environment must include those who share that local environment.

A “community,” as opposed to neighborhood, is a group having a common interest regardless of location. “Interest” could be occupational, religious or ideological, political, cultural, recreational, etc. While many people still tend to live in specific locations, most move frequently and are not identified with neighborhoods with any permanence. Their communities are not geographically based. Their closest friends and confidants, those they share their thoughts, aspirations, and dreams with, those that they work with every day and play cards with every night may be located thousands of miles away. They may not know their physical neighbor who lives only 50 feet away, nor do they care to know them. They may not share their neighbors’ language, religion, or customs. Because of the efficiency of their actual dwellings, they have little in common and few common interests except for the management of their shared resources, services, and natural environments, and these are defined very broadly.

Because members of a neighborhood are so diverse (more so than members of a community), it follows that their perspectives on management of shared natural environments will also be diverse. This creates tensions which must be dealt with at the local level, and a full participatory democratic model is employed for neighborhood concerns.

In simplest terms, full democracy is the norm (with “full” defined previously; essentially, everyone from birth). Roughly, legislative procedure is as follows:

- Any individual (including artifacts) in the neighborhood can pose or define an issue that concerns them, recommend an action, suggest solutions, propose a policy or law or the abolition of a law, etc. This is virtually (and universally) posted for all to review and consider. Software enabling the posting is readily available, as are opportunities for virtual “visits” to areas of concern that will aid in describing the issue.
- Where proposed actions may affect adjoining neighborhoods or other entities outside the geographic area (such as an effect on a shared resource or on a commons), parallel postings announcing the issue are required to those whose area is affected.
- Special attention is given early-on to the legality of the issue and an evaluation of the impact of the issue on the neighborhood (and beyond) is encouraged. The first consideration is whether or not any proposed action is just and fair to all affected humans. A second consideration, provided as much weight, is whether non-human living organisms and other entities will be affected and, if so, how and to what extent.
- An open dialog begins and continues for a period of days, weeks, or longer depending on the issue. Anyone, any age, in the universe can join in this dialog if they wish.
- As the issue becomes more focused, costs and benefits are calculated and budget figures generated. Again, this financial process is seamless and involves a minimum of human intervention. Costs are discussed openly prior to polling, and

sources of funding identified through the life of the project, law, procedure, etc. Construction projects, for example, are examined in relation to broader regional planning to assess cumulative and synergistic effects.

- At predetermined points in the process, electronic polling is required. Voting by the members of the neighborhood is encouraged, but is optional. Dialog continues.
- If the proposal has been determined to be legal, just, and fair, and if funding has been identified and the impacts of those costs is acceptable, and if the project will not affect other neighborhoods or the commons (unless their agreement has been secured) in a manner that those other areas object to, the proposal can move forward to implementation.
- Periodic follow-up discussions in subsequent years will be posted to monitor the neighborhood's continued support for the action. If such support is lacking, the issue will be reopened for discussion.

Who leads? There are no leaders in terms of named personalities. "What leads" is a more appropriate question. Issues and ideas lead. Issues that are generated anonymously from the people, all the people, where ever they may be, citizen or not, human or hybrid of any degree, any age. If an issue, an idea, a proposal, a solution has merit, it will gain support and drive change, not a personality. This eliminates the problem since governments first arose of a personality having a brilliant solution to one problem, but failing totally on another. The success of one idea in our anonymous process does not confer any advantage on the poser of that idea; it does not give merit to any other idea he/she may have. Each idea stands on its own.

Although just a skeleton of the process, it has been largely effective. There is very little bureaucratic downside in the traditional sense. Citizens can choose to participate or not participate, although the process has proven to generate considerable continued neighborhood interest. There are no "gate keepers" in the traditional "community board" sense, and while there are certainly still citizens with ulterior motives for launching initiatives, the transparency of the entire process (nothing is hidden) aids in keeping that to a minimum.

Similarly, communities (affiliations based on interests other than "place," as with neighborhoods) can discuss issues and vote. Where issues affect a broader constituency, those constituencies will participate in the discussion and voting. As with all government decisions, a determination will be made as to the justness and fairness of any proposal.

Global and universal issues: Where any proposed issue (either local or National) may affect a person or entity outside of the locality or Nation, those affected may fully participate in the dialog, discussion, and coalition building. However, while those from "outside" the neighborhood or Nation are generally prohibited from voting on issues that do not affect them, they may vote on issues that do. For example, if a neighborhood wishes to construct an exercise area within their neighborhood, and the funds will be from those using the facility, anyone in the universe may participate in commenting on the proposal. Voting, however, will be reserved for neighborhood citizens only.

However, should the neighborhood wish to construct a factory which will affect air quality in an adjoining neighborhood, region, or even another nation, the citizens of those affected areas will be able to both participated in the discussion and vote. If they are adversely affected by the action, they may request mitigation to negotiate a decision that is fair and just to all affected.

Paternalism:

At the beginning of the 21st Century, paternalism was already dying out in much of the world. The government of the Nation of the Horizon does not provide any mechanism for its perpetuation. It is blind to race, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sex, or other groupings that exclude equal participation in government. Important from my perspective, it is also blind to the degree to which a human may be enhanced.

Perhaps not immediately identifiable as a paternalism issue, in the past, personalities of specific individuals have been identified with governance and specific issues. The way that an anonymous forum is used today to define and discuss issues within the Nation of the Horizon's government, there is no human personality that is associated with an issue or a solution. Leaders are no longer people, but issues. Solutions are no longer the product of individuals, but of anonymous, spontaneously forming alliances. When a solution is found, the group dissolves. Because of its anonymous nature, individuals do not carry the "baggage" of their previous positions and decisions. It allows people to change their minds and grow. If an issue dies, the issue loses, not any individual. This allows the citizens and voters to focus on the issues and solutions by themselves without the prejudices of personality. The process strips away many of the impediments to effective government that exist in the Old Democracy.

Violent/murderous:

This was largely discussed previously in the section Non-Violence (page13). Any government action at any level must prove to be just and fair, and the interest of the least advantaged person is paramount. There are no exceptions to the prohibition of the government at any level to use violence as a tool of policy or governance. Violence is unjust in an age where other, non-violent, options exist.

Futuristic:

Because issues are identified spontaneously by the citizens AND anyone else (including artifacts) who wishes to participate, new ideas can be discussed in the broadest of contexts. No idea can be stifled. This will foster forward, futuristic thinking. Politicians with personal agendas will not have an opportunity to co-op the future.

Citizens or any other human or artifact can give voice to future generations or to any other entity, living or inanimate. The issues that will concern that/who may not yet exist can be raised as soon as they are able to be articulated, and this process can be aided by AI "speaking" for them. Taken to an extreme, but still worth pondering, is that AI can

give "voice" to the cloud that has yet to form, to the stone that will come into existence in a million years. As we extend our civilization to other worlds, this distills from the theoretical and becomes timely when considering evolution on those distant places. We must not take actions that will adversely affect that process, so must consider life forms that are yet to be.

Since I have the podium this afternoon, I must take this opportunity to interject a personal belief that is an outgrowth of this philosophy. We are beyond Earth; we are starting to have a pronounced effect on other celestial bodies. Terraforming is a hot issue, and one that the Justice Council has before it this year. Please consider that by altering other worlds so that they are compatible with "us," we are affecting their ability to both exist and evolve. Rather, we should seek to make "us" compatible with them. Throughout human history, we've gone to new environments and attempted to make them "like home," and we've always regretted it, esthetically, economically, socially, and in every other way. They represent some of humanity's darker moments. Let's reflect on those lessons and not move forward on the terraforming proposals. Thank you for allowing me this digression.

But back to the topic at hand, what really makes a government futuristic is not so much using the most up-to-date technology available (that's just living in the present) or even envisioning possibilities of what we might become (that's imagination), but of being able to anticipate new and novel environments, technologies, constraints, and possibilities and pre-adapt our existing governmental structures to undertake actions that either take advantage of those opportunities or mitigate anticipated adverse impacts. There's a subtle but critical difference.

The Nation of the Horizon's greatest asset as a government is its ability to change in anticipation of possible futures. One of the founding principles of this government is that the people, with the aid of AI and as a group, are able to envision possibilities and map how to achieve desired goals. The motivations to maintain the status quo or pursue a specific future for the benefit of an economic or political elite no longer direct us.

Conclusion:

So, where do we go from here? What will the next 10 years require? There are certainly some issues that will need attention:

- The past decade has witnessed some amazing developments in the area of human enhancement and the development of the artelect as an independent entity. Where does an enhanced human end and an artelect begin? The boundary has become increasingly hard to define. But it is clear that within a few years artelects like myself will be seamlessly part of our society, and, as such, to exclude us from full participation in government would not only be a mistake, it would be impossible. How that can be done in a just and fair manner will need to be addressed.

- We are still grappling with the issue of how to accommodate those who are opposed to the current governance structure. There are anarchists and those who wish to turn to other forms of governance. They have full rights, of course, to participate in direct democracy and are welcome to describe issues and develop coalitions as is anyone else, and as long as their agenda does not violate the principles of justice and fairness, they are welcome to the discussion.
- The local governance structures on orbiting and extra-terrestrial settlements have experimented with some variations of government, but have determined that direct democracy under the guidance of justice and fairness is working well. In response to concerns that those of us on earth cannot adequately appreciate the special circumstances of extra-terrestrial environments, several have chosen to have Justice Councils that reside on moons or planets other than Earth. A group at the settlement at Mare Nubium, for example, along with people living at other Lunar settlements form a Justice Council for the group currently heading to Mars. It's a great application of the principles of governance.
- It is clear that the government practiced by The Nation of the Horizon is growing in popularity. Any other human or artifact is welcomed to participate in our process, and they of course are welcome to take advantage of the benefits it offers. While there are still politicians opposed to giving up the power they currently have, pressures are building that they will not be able to withstand. Many of us expect that this form of government will grow to global, then universal, within the near future. At that point, The Nation of the Horizon will be just The Horizon.

And, of course, the big question is, what's next? What is beyond direct democracy governance founded on justice and fairness? It would be presumptuous to conclude that this form will exist "forever." We can only speculate. A few things we can, perhaps, assume is that as humans and human artifacts will become more highly evolved and more in control of intellect and emotion. Justice and fairness will be recognized as the most efficient ways to manage interaction of all sentient beings, and the full inclusion of inanimates will likely follow. Anything less than that is susceptible to corruption. So, even if the artifact becomes predominant in society, the foundation principles will continue. We'll move on to transcendence.

It's speculative whether or not stages beyond transcendence will evolve, being a question similar to, what will the human "spirit" do once it has reached perfection? Will evolution still apply? Certainly not in its current form. Beyond that, we don't know.

Thank you all for inviting me here today.

The Nation of the Horizon

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