The Magellan Initiative
Mike Granatt, Dr James Young and Dr Patrick Lagadec

launch a new initiative to link people who try, at an international level, to understand and tackle emerging mega-crisis.

The Magellan Network

The Magellan Network is presently linking three hubs around Mike Granatt, former Head of the Civil Contingencies Secretariat, Cabinet Office, UK, Patrick Lagadec, École Polytechnique, France, and Special Advisor to CRJ on Uncivilian Contingencies; and Dr James Young, former Special Advisor to the Deputy Minister, Public Safety Canada. The accidental circle of the 20th Century has mutated into systemic dislocations calling for new intelligence – and new tools – in the 21st Century, and on all fronts. Trans-complexity is the name of the game, financial turmoil in the USA hogs risks in China and shakes the whole planet. Organisations and economies can only survive if leaders adopt the necessary strategy. Four gates have to be opened:

■ Culture: build a culture of informed, broad-minded and informed watchfulness;

■ Operation: apply discipline to preparation, immediate response and the strategic decision-cycle;

■ Intelligence: apply rapid reflection and determined back-up processes; and

■ Education: produce capable people capable of thinking and acting in a new way.

We need the culture of the Hubwash concept to understand this highly connected world of networked society. Our ability to deliver huge flows of money, energy, goods, information and emotion between the hubs on the network is critical. Hubwashers also see the leading edge of the crisis as it travels onwards, disrupting the fast and the future, jumping from one issue to another if we have hubwashers in the right places, aware of the potential, able to press the right buttons, and above all who are able and duty-bound to talk to each other. We will have the Hubwash – our first line of essential defence against crisis.

Hubwash needs the understanding support and authority of leaders to make it happen. It will be a federation prepared for the next war, not the last, a great common

understanding for the common good. But where the Hubwash’s tissue, flexible and sensitive, the reactive mechanisms must be determined, practiced, and disciplined.

A crisis robs us of time; immediate standard responses will buy time, but disciplined and practiced strategic management process must be ready to converge. John Boyd’s OODA loop decision cycle must be fully understood and used. Observation – gathering the information, Orientation – providing a single co-ordinated assessment of ground truth, risks and options for decision-makers, and aligning resources with decision-making. Decision-making – determined, agenda-led meeting, driven strongly to focus on the assessment and decisions; and Action, pursuing the decisions with determination and energy.

Boyd’s central point was that the decision cycle is the central mechanism enabling adaptation (apart from natural selection) and is therefore critical to survival. OODA uses discipline to drive learning, adaptation and decision making, co-ordinating decision-makers to consider the real strategic challenges, not the old assumptions. Again, for this new pattern to emerge, leaders must fully accept that now the speed of change is the environment in which we operate as a sanctioned body and leaders should be obligated to listen to the committee’s advice or explain why it was not taken.

Whatever the model, it would be used to look at issues as an ongoing basis, not just when a crisis arises. In the book of all worlds, private industry and government would work together in managing with that kind of expertise.

We need to teach leaders and future leaders about best practices built on globally accepted paradigms. But crisis changes the paradigm.

We must start from the best-known questions to previous questions, to seeking out the new and strange questions. The goal is not to produce people who can apply pre-planned answers; we need people who expect and embrace the new and the novel. We need to accept new signals and improved and strange questions. The goal is not to produce people who can apply pre-planned answers; we need people who expect and embrace the new and the novel. We need to accept new signals and improved

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