

The new political-economic reality

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While scanning through all the FT emails that I received each morning, I noted this conjunction of headlines:

UK to receive last tanker of jet fuel from Middle East this week

Industry warnings of disruption contrast with government calls for calm

Iran could emerge from the war stronger and more dangerous

The Islamic republic aims to set up a toll booth on the Strait of Hormuz. It may succeed

UK politicians are walking around like headless chickens without a clue what to do in the face of the crisis that is developing as a consequence of the war in the Middle East. We will all pay an enormous price for their incompetence.

And so great is their incompetence that FT writers can already see that the opportunity for others to exploit this situation to their advantage is growing.

If, as seems ever-increasingly likely, Iran emerges with what it can describe as a victory from this war, whilst the forces of the USA and Israel and all their supporters are humiliated, the disruption to the world order is going to be seismic in its proportions.

The Western military industrial complex, which has dominated the world's political-economic agenda during most of the post-war era, will be revealed as something that countries with asymmetric political-economic advantages can both challenge and defeat.

What is not known is the psychological impact of this power rebalancing on the world agenda.

What we can be sure of is that if this were to happen, the status of countries like the USA, Israel and the UK will be severely diminished, and we will have to face a new world agenda that many, with their chosen prejudices within those countries, will find extremely difficult to accommodate.

We are cursed, as the Chinese proverb puts it, to live in interesting times.

What we will most certainly need is a new generation of political leadership that understands where we are in the world, what the political priorities of post conflict countries in the West should be, and how we should manage our economies to ensure that the safety of the world at large is now the priority for humankind as a whole.