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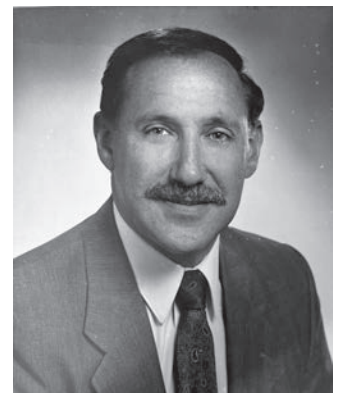
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Steven Wimpfheimer
1999-2000

IN MEMORIAM

Remembering Past Presidents Steven Wimpfheimer and Michael Feigenbaum



Michael K. Feigenbaum
1986-1987

The Queens County Bar Association and the greater legal community lost two legends mere hours apart with the passing of Steven Wimpfheimer in the evening of March 5 and Michael Feigenbaum in the morning of March 6. The two men will long be remembered and missed by those who knew them.

Steve and Mike, both 83, shared much more than just their involvement with the QCBA. Both were preeminent attorneys in their respective practice areas, active members of the New York State Bar Association and devoted family men. In a unique irony, they were also brothers-in-law, as Steve's wife Ruth is Michael's sister.

Steve Wimpfheimer graduated Brooklyn Law School in 1966 before going on to serve as a United States Army Captain in Vietnam. Steve served as a

Law Assistant and Law Clerk in Queens Supreme Court prior to starting his own firm specializing in Tax Certiorari proceedings. A QCBA member since 1968, he held various positions for the association, including a term as President at the turn of the millennium, serving from 1999-2000. He remained actively involved with QCBA and the QCBA Fund in the years that followed and was serving as Second Vice President of the QCBA Fund at the time of his passing. Steve was also a member of the Nassau County Bar Association and the New York State Bar Association, where he served as a Vice President and an executive committee member of the Real Estate Section.

But Steve was much more than "just" an attorney. Steve was devoted to his family, enjoying a nearly 60-year marriage to his wife Ruth and

their three children, Debbie, Bobby and Amy. He had a large family both in the United States and in Israel that he remained in regular contact with. Steve was also proud of his Jewish faith and spent many years learning as much as he could about Judaism. He devoted countless hours assisting various charitable organizations and non-profit community entities with their real estate and tax certiorari matters and supported many others with donations of his time and money.

Michael Feigenbaum was a larger-than-life figure within his professional circles, widely recognized as one of the best Trust and Estates practitioners in New York. His career encompassed nearly all aspects of the Trusts and Estates world, including serving in the Surrogate's Court law department,

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Editor's Note

Law and Government on Today's Silk Road

By Paul E. Kerson

I took my 16-day vacation early this year. My wife of many decades, Marleen Kassel Kerson and I went on a Smithsonian Journey, "The Silk Road: A Journey to Central Asia".

Marleen is a retired Queens College professor of World History, Japanese History and Chinese History. She wanted to see some of the places she taught all those years. Also on the trip was Sue Henderson, the retired Queens College Director of Institutional Advancement and Past President of New Jersey City University.

This Editor's Note is meant to explore the roots of the relatively new Law and Government of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Before 1917, these five countries were nomadic lands, all known as Turkestan. When the Soviet Union was formed, Turkestan was conquered by the Russians and

divided into these five Soviet republics. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, these five Soviet republics became independent states.

This Editor's Note is also meant to demonstrate that all of the Earth's many peoples are literally cousins and that war is unnecessary so long as Colonel Sanders and General Tso and everybody else is free to compete to sell chicken and everything else on the Silk Road (See below).

The opinions in this Editor's Note are my own, not pre-approved by the Smithsonian Institution or the Queens County Bar Association, or anybody else for that matter. Any errors are also my own, although I have fact-checked everything that appears below.

And what a trip it was. Our national museum, the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, DC turned itself inside out for 23 Americans from around the country for the vacation of a lifetime.

Usually, one visits a museum and views and reads the exhibits. I always buy the book of photographs and descriptions of the exhibits at the end of the day and re-read them for years to come.

But this was something else entirely. Rather than collecting the exhibits and bringing them to Washington, the Smithsonian chartered a series of Chinese Yuotong and European

Mercedes tour buses and drivers and drove us all over today's Silk Road, the ancient Asia-to-Europe trade route.

We had two outstanding independent tour guides to keep the tour free of any official United States Government position or bias. Prof. Alexander Diener of the University of Kansas Geography Department and Aleksandr Balyasnikov, an independent tour manager from Samarkand, Uzbekistan were with us 24/7 to give lectures and answer questions. I had hundreds of questions. I hope they did not think I was cross-examining them. In retrospect, I guess I was.

1. Great Power Confrontation

We literally were on the frontier of a world economic competition. Three of the major cities of the ancient Silk Road are Khiva, Bukhara and Samarkand, all in Uzbekistan. All are dominated by General Motors Company (GM) of Detroit, Michigan and its local licensee, UzAuto Motors, 99.7% owned by the Government of Uzbekistan.

UzAuto Motors maintains Chevrolet factories in Asaka, Pitnak and Tashkent, Uzbekistan. They produce small Chevrolets under the model names Cobalt, Lacetti, Nexia and Spark, and a half-size minivan under the model name Manas (named for an historic Uzbek leader of centuries ago). The Manas was originally produced by the South Korean manufacturer, Daewoo Auto, and sold to GM and then passed on to UzAuto Motors and sold under the Chevrolet name.

Our Uzbek guide Alex Balyasnikov noted that the Chevrolet Manas can fit 29 live sheep if packed right. Despite its small size, the Chevrolet Manas is the perfect replacement for the camel, as it is smaller and can carry more.

In 2024, UzAuto Motors sold 353,730 Chevrolets in a country with a population of 37,053,428 today. In 2024 GM sold 1,745,809 Chevrolets in the United States, with a population of 340,100,000 today, mostly Chevrolet Silverados, a very large pickup truck.

Because UzAuto Motors is government owned, very few other car brands are found along the Silk Road in Uzbekistan. There is also no labor union



A painting of camels on the ancient Silk Road of yesteryear, and photographs of today's replacements – the Chevrolet Cobalt and Chevrolet Manas

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at UzAuto Motors plants in Uzbekistan. See Google, GM, UzAuto Motors, population, sales and production figures.

One can only conclude that GM is doing far better on the Silk Road in Uzbekistan than it is on US Interstate 80 (GW Bridge of NJ to Bay Bridge of San Francisco). With a government near monopoly on sales and no labor unions in Uzbekistan, how long will it be before GM leaves Detroit completely?

At the national border between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, we saw a truck from Poland. On the Silk Road in Uzbekistan, we saw a truck from the Czech Republic.

Compare this Western Tilt with the section of the Silk Road in adjacent Kyrgyzstan. There we ran into the BRI – the Belt and Road Initiative – China's attempt to pave the Silk Road into a modern highway and gain economic power over the countries the Silk Road runs through.

They are doing it all wrong. The Interstate Highway System started in the Eisenhower Administration and took more than 20 years to complete. The Federal Highway Administration developed the Interstate Standard:

- (a) Wide green median strips of land between the lanes in each direction, thus making head-on deadly crashes nearly impossible, and
- (b) Large green and white road signs so everyone will know where they are going, also preventing accidents of people looking for the wrong exit.



Kyrgyzstan Chinese BRI with Kentucky Fried Chicken's Colonel Sanders carefully guarding the Silk Road and beckoning Kyrgyz and other Silk Road travelers.

Sometimes the Chinese follow the Interstate Standard, but usually not. Pro-Western Uzbekistan is not doing much better on their portion of the Silk Road – lots of Chevrolets but few wide green median strips or large green and white road signs.

Chevrolets have become so common in Uzbekistan that “chevy” has become the Uzbek word for car, as in “my Toyota Chevy”. Note the complete contrast with Turkmenistan, where Chevrolets are banned and most of the cars on their portion of the Silk Road are Hondas and Toyotas, as is the case in New York.

The dictatorial government in Turkmenistan has decreed that all cars in their country must be painted white. No other colors allowed. Same for their government buildings – only white marble will do. Their capital city, Ashbagat, has beautiful new white largely empty government ministry buildings and lots of white Hondas and Toyotas. Surrounding Ashbagat are the run-down homes of subsistence farmers.



Also note the photo of the attitude of the Kyrgyz towards the Chinese BRI – a statue of a fierce looking dragon made of auto parts.

Also note that there is no indication of any competing Chinese General Tso's chicken, egg rolls, spare ribs or won ton soup to compete with Colonel Sanders. Why did the Chinese seek to pave the Silk Road but not use it for commerce?

I know I have lived a full life when I have seen Colonel Sanders from Kentucky guarding the ancient Silk Road. By looking at my photo of him, you too, dear readers, have now seen everything.

If, as and when the Chinese get around to opening General Tso's Chicken to compete with Colonel Sanders, there will be no need

for additional tariffs or wars, as everyone on the Silk Road will be well fed. With competition, prices should come down.

2. Five Former Soviet Republics

Turkistan was a land of nomads with no central law or government until it became part of the Russian empire of the Czars bit by bit in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

After the Russian Revolution of 1917, the Soviet Union was created with 15 Soviet Socialist Republics. Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan Soviet Socialist Republics were started at that time, divided from the land of Turkistan.

Muslim mosques, Russian Orthodox Churches and Jewish synagogues were all forcibly closed as “an opiate of the masses”.

Central Asia is overwhelmingly Muslim. We toured dozens of beautifully restored mosques and newly built ones, all after “the Soviet time” which nevertheless was fondly remembered by older Central Asians as a time when everyone had free health care, free education and a paying job.

We toured the physically beautiful Russian Orthodox Christian Churches, closed during “the Soviet time” and reopened by Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan after independence in 1991.

The one remaining synagogue in Bukhara and its school has been placed in Uzbek State Government protection even though there are only 200 members left. During “the Soviet time” they were miraculously allowed to remain open as “a community center”. They possess the oldest Torah in the world continuously in use – more than 1000 years old. Google says there is an older one in Bologna, Italy, but the current Bukhara synagogue President disputes this. See Google, Oldest Torah in continuous use.

The large once-thriving Bukharan Jewish community had relocated in “the Soviet time” in the 1980s to the State of Israel and – you guessed it – the home of freedom for everybody – Queens County, NY, where they built a beautiful new synagogue for the Bukharan Jewish community across the street from the Forest Hills U.S. Post Office.

In “the Soviet time” all economic decisions were made in Moscow. The 15 Soviet republics were told what to produce, what to charge and how to run their factories and farms. Five year plans were made scheduling all production five years into the future in complete ignorance of market conditions – who exactly might want to buy what five years from now.

This resulted in massive internal corruption on a scale we cannot even imagine. Factory and farm managers created documents that swore they met their quotas even when they had not. Sales goals were met on paper whether or not they were true. Actual surpluses went on the black market.

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By 1991, this “system” collapsed. There was no more Soviet Union with Moscow dictating quotas and sales goals that were works of fiction,

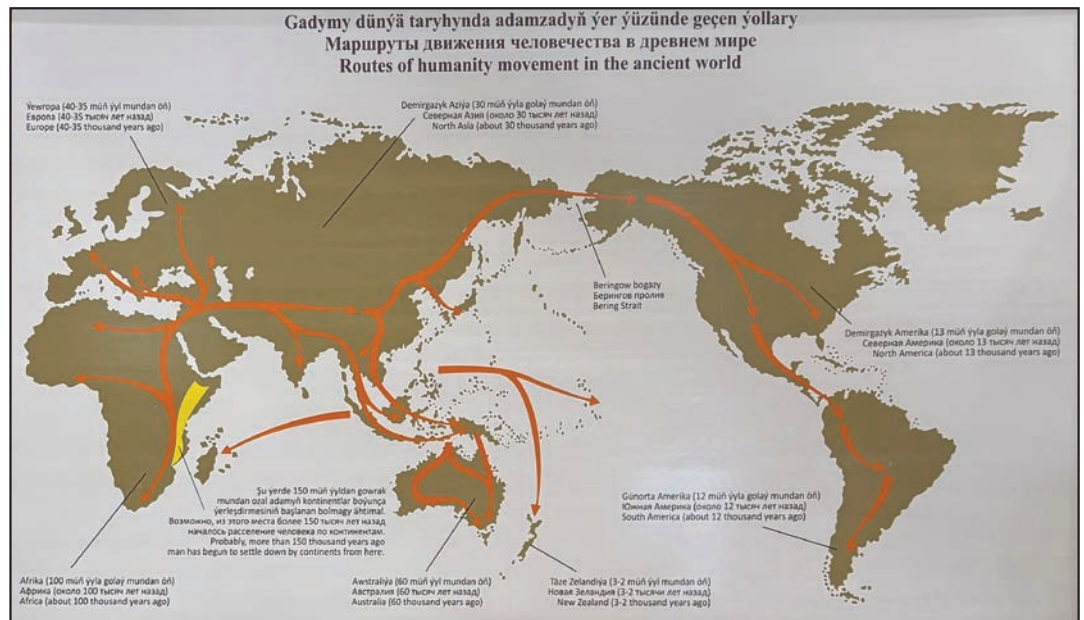
“They pretend to pay us and we pretend to work” had become the national motto.

Shuttered mosques, churches and synagogues only added to the cynicism of a series of peoples overwhelmed with corruption and constant government lying.

The Aral Sea was drained to irrigate fields of cotton and vegetables to meet unrealistic sales goals. The deliberate destruction of the Aral Sea was called “one of the planet’s worst environmental disasters” in 2011 by United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon. See Google, Aral Sea.

Thus, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan got independence in 1991 even though they did not ask for it or demand it. Nomadic tribesmen ignored the Soviets as much as they could.

In reality, the Turkmen, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kyrgyz, and Kazakhs were tribes, just like the Han Chinese. Carleton College Prof. Adeb Khalid describes the governments of these countries this way:



Turkmenistan National Museum

“...the independent countries of Central Asia are national states of indigenous populations. Islam represents part of the national cultural heritage that they profess to promote. With the turn to Sincization, China is without question the national state of the Han...” See Khalid, Central Asia, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2021, page 494, pages 393-433.

3. The Turkmen and the Hopis

Our Turkmenistan guide, Elias Jummiyev, believes that the American Hopi Indians of Arizona were, in reality, Turkmen descendants. Recall that American Indians were once Asians who crossed the Bering Strait starting 12,000 years ago.

In the Turkmenistan National Museum, we saw a map of human development of 155,000 years.

Humanity started in Africa, moved to Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand and then on to North and South America. (See the photograph of this map reproduced with this Editor's Note.)

No one needed a Green Card, visa or passport in all those 155,000 years until approximately 120 years ago.

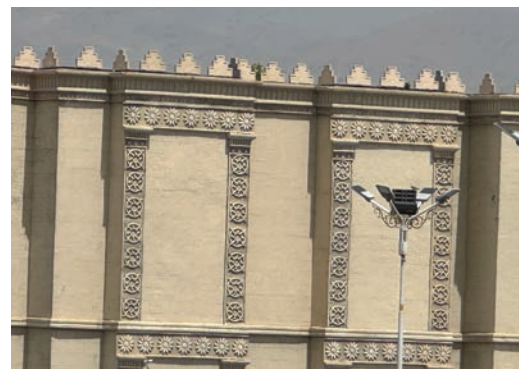
I set out to find out if Elias Jummiyev was right about this. (Adjacent photos show the Turkmenistan flag of five indigenous Turkmen tribes. Note the tribe with three building blocks of each side of a pyramid. Note the Tajik Archaeology Museum's display of the same design. Note the Lotte City Hotel Tashkent Palace's same display. Finally, note the American Hopi Indian display of the same design on their artwork in Arizona.)

The following thought occurred to me – how to understand the striking similarities of the following Governments:

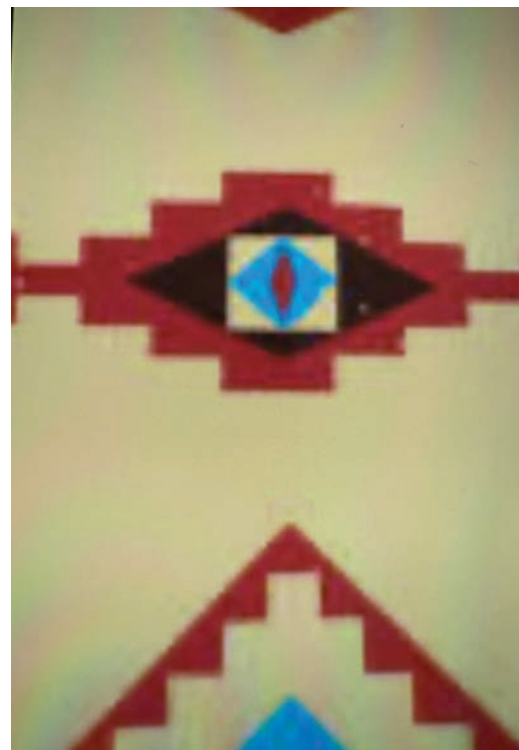
- (a) King Charles III, King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Canada, Australia and of his other Realms and Territories, King, Head of the Commonwealth and Defender of the Faith
- (b) The Han Chinese,
- (c) The Turkmen,
- (d) The Uzbeks,
- (e) The Tajiks,
- (f) The Kyrgyz,
- (g) The Kazakhs, and
- (h) The Hopis of Arizona

What is the most striking similarity? If you are not a Member of the Tribe, you are not eligible to become the Chief under any circumstances. All of the above have governments derived strictly from heredity.

If you think King Charles III is a mere figurehead, think again. Has British, Canadian and Australian foreign policy ever differed among the three of



Tajik Archaeology Museum



American Hopi Indian display



Lotte City Hotel Tashkent Palace



Turkmenistan Flag

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them? Compare this zero level of disagreement with American treatment of the King who speaks our same English language in 1776-83 and 1811-1812. No hereditary chief for us.

How are the Arizona Hopis governed today? The website of the Hopi Tribal Government tells us that the Hopi Tribal Council “has the power and authority to represent and speak for the Hopi Tribe, and to negotiate with federal, state and local governments, and with councils or governments of other tribes.”

Who sits on the Hopi Tribal Council? 22 representatives of six Arizona Hopi villages. How are these 22 representatives selected? By appointment of the Village Kikmongivi (Chief) or selected by community consensus. The Tribal Council picks its Chair.

The Hopi Tribal Government model is more or less repeated by the majority tribes of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgystan, Kazakhstan, the Han Chinese and the British Monarchy (with the modification of an elected Parliament beneath the King), who is also the hereditary King of Canada and Australia (with different elected Parliaments) and 11 other Realms.

This is not democracy, communism, socialism, dictatorship or any other form of government we currently understand. Rather, it is the hereditary tribal self-perpetuating government that has governed most of humanity for most of its 155,000 years of existence.

It is only in understanding hide-bound tribe-oriented government that we can understand our own chaotic, disorganized, loud, inconsistent and wildly successful governments— local, state and federal—generally acting in organized conflict with each other.

4. The American Imagination

How can such a messy system with very few hereditary tribes be such a success?

Why is it that we Americans have invented the steamboat, the steam railroad, the sewing machine, the cotton gin, the electric stove, the refrigerator, the photoelectric cell, plastic, synthetic fibers, the assembly line, electric power, the light bulb, the phonograph, the storage battery, the dictaphone, the motion picture, the airplane, the airport, the spaceship, rockets, the telegraph, the telephone, the cell phone, the trans-Atlantic cable, antibiotics, the Salk vaccine, the power loom, the credit card, the tractor, gasoline, the interstate highway, the photocopying machine, the supermarket, the internet, the transistor, the microwave, the Kodak camera, the streetcar, the global positioning device, the personal computer, the traffic light, email, the hearing aid, the laser, the pacemaker, the smallpox vaccine, the green revolution, penicillin, air conditioning, air traffic control, Uber, Lyft, Via, self-driving cars, artificial

intelligence and the laptop? Radio, automobiles, television and cable television were perfected on a grand scale. See Google, American Inventions, and Paul E. Kerson, “Only the Beginning”, *The New York Times*, Sunday, Sept. 10, 1989.

If you study this list, you cannot help but conclude that these inventions, taken together, constitute the entire modern world. All of these inventions have been adopted by the hereditary societies of our planet. The cities of Tashkent, Ashgabat, Bishkek, Almaty, Bukhara, Samarkand, Khiva and Penjikent looked modern, prosperous and well-run.

It is most important to understand that from the dawn of humanity 155,500 years ago until 1789, humanity had NONE OF THE ABOVE and got around on dirt roads with only horses and camels to help them. To communicate, they mostly had to shout or wait for a rare copy of a book or newspaper to be delivered by horseback.

What happened in 1789 that propelled the world forward like a freshly launched rocket? Some geniuses met in Philadelphia and New York and wrote the following:

“Congress shall have the power...to promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries”

“Congress shall have the power...to establish a uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform laws on the subject of bankruptcies throughout the United States...”

These most important laws of all time are from the United States Constitution, Article I, Section 8, clauses 8 and 4.

This meant that the most imaginative and ambitious people on earth were invited to come here and settle the new country, and bring their new ideas, where they could build a better mousetrap and get wealthy. If their ideas did not work, U.S. Bankruptcy Courts would be established to let one try again. And so it came to pass that the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, the U.S. Copyright Office, and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services acted together to keep the new inventions flowing—the milk and honey of imagination that got the world off its camels and horses and on to jet airplanes, that shrank the planet into airports in every major city, all built from the American imagination.

Could any of the above listed inventions have happened in a hide-bound hereditary tribal society, where one is encouraged to do things as they have always been done?

The proof is in the evidence. In 1789, we were all still using horses and camels to get around very slowly.

5. A Solution Going Forward

So, we should strike a deal with the Han Chinese and every other tribal society. We, the chaotic,

loud, messy society with few hereditary tribes will provide you with all kinds of new ideas, and you, with greater tribal discipline, can carry them out in organized production. War will become as unnecessary as it is undesirable. In trading new ideas for new production, everyone benefits enormously.

“Move fast and break things.” That is the motto of Silicon Valley. The Han Chinese, King of Great Britain, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Turkmen, Kyrgyz, Kazakhs and Hopis would never tolerate such a motto.

And as we are structured, Washington cannot control Silicon Valley, Hollywood, Detroit or Atlanta. Everywhere we went we saw Coca-Cola and Pepsi signs, televisions, Chevys, Cell phones, and laptops - none of it controlled from Washington, DC.

This idea is a modification of the economic philosophy of David Ricardo (1772-1823), a Member of the British Parliament. He called it Comparative Advantage, and he explained it as follows:

“Nations should specialize in producing goods for which they have the lowest opportunity cost relative to other goods...”

Nations should concentrate resources only in industries where they have the greatest efficiency of production relative to their own alternative uses of resources.” See Google, David Ricardo, Comparative Advantage.

There is no possible way that David Ricardo could have predicted that the then brand-new United States would become the best nation in history at producing the ideas for new inventions, far outpacing every other country.

Ideas are not grapes, or corn, or wheat, or timber, or wine. If he were alive today, David Ricardo would update his theory of Comparative Advantage.

If ideas for new products and services are largely with one country, certainly the more disciplined hereditary states should do production, while the United States concentrates on invention. Because the population of the United States is largely free of hereditary restraints in thinking creatively, this is the division of labor that makes the most economic sense in the 2000s. This means the United States should invest in laboratories and universities and hereditary states should invest in factories.

This explains why iPhones are designed in California but produced in China. It explains why the hereditary state of Japan is better at building car factories than the polyglot United States.

Give chaotic, disorganized, loud, inconsistent and messy America its due. It is the home of thousands of new ideas not likely in more disciplined tribes – and that has made all the difference.