Networked and Vulnerable

What is the issue?

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- A tightly-connected world is more imperilled by cyber attack, disease and global warming.
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- It requires inspired leadership, In this context China have an opportunity.
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What are the present threats faced by the globe?

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- The world has a population of 7.6 billion people, Of them, 5.1 billion have subscriptions to mobile phones.
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- 4 billion have access to internet, and 3.1 billion are active users of the social media.
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- Cyber terrorism is a major concern due to the easier internet accessibility and mobile usage.
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- The world is a risky place and it is getting riskier, the foundations of the post Cold War, post Berlin Wall global system have weakened.
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- Leaders are not doing enough to arrest the dangers of global warming and the “global commons” remains unmanaged.
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What are the concerns of being tightly networked?

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- About 1,000-year old Roman Empire collapsed because of the viral spread of

the “network borne threats” of religion (Christianity), disease (bubonic plague) and migration (the Germanic tribes).
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- These threats spread because of physical and spiritual connectivity.
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- They permeated every strata of the Empire’s governance and social hierarchy.
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- The leadership did not anticipate or have the capability to contain the spread.
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- The result was the erosion of the foundations of the Empire and its eventual demise.
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- Even today challenge of managing and mitigating “network borne” threats (cyber, pandemics, global warming) is on most government and corporate agendas.
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- But instead of converging towards a common purpose for managing these threats, the world leaders are adopting divergent, populist and localised approaches.
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What are the issues with global leaderships?

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- **USA -**US President Trump has set the cat amongst the globalist pigeons with his disruptive brand of economic nationalism, trade protectionism and twittered derision of multilateralism.
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- **EU -**The EU is riven by leaders like the PMs/Chancellors of Poland, Italy, Hungary and Austria who want to build a fortress against migrants and those like Chancellor of Germany and President of France who hold steadfast to the benefits of a passport free “Shengen” Europe.
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- **UK -**The UK has a default PM in office because the Conservative party is irreconcilably divided over Brexit and the members cannot agree on a more palatable alternative.
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- **Russia -**President of Russia appears unconcerned about the implications of his action on global stability and the Middle East is a sectarian cauldron on

the boil with the two regional hegemons, Saudi Arabia and Iran, in implacable opposition to each other.
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What is the significance of Chinese leadership?

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- The world needs not just technical talent but courageous, resilient and selfless leadership in the face of impending crisis.
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- The only two countries that stand out in this landscape as islands of relative stability and strong leadership are India and China.
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- China has recognised that this fragmented world offers an opportunity.
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- It has projected itself, ironically as the custodian of the multilateral rules based system and it is using its financial leverage to broaden strategic relations, Its One Belt One Road is a manifestation of this intent.
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Source: Indian Express

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