Twitter Thread by Martin Jacques



Martin Jacques
@martjacques

1/8 Britain is in almost complete lockdown. Nine months since the first. Europe is closing its borders to the British. Across Europe the pandemic is worsening. The US has over 300,000 dead. Far from getting better, the situation in the West is getting worse. The West has failed.

2/8 At what point will the West wake up to the fact this is an historic crisis of Western government, society and culture? Without a vaccine, the West has shown that it cannot deal with the virus. It has been forced to admit defeat and live with it. And it is losing the battle.

3/8 The West likes to think it is cosmopolitan. Wrong. It is increasingly provincial in its mentality. East Asian societies have conquered Covid-19. We barely even acknowledge the fact. We desperately try to ignore that China has succeeded where we have catastrophically failed.

4/8 If the West was cosmopolitan it would seek to learn from East Asia, ask why it is successful. Yet the worse things get, the less curious the West has become about East Asia. This is the story of the West as a failing, self-absorbed, inward-looking culture and civilization.

5/8 The success of East Asia, with China at its heart, has many explanations including: 1. Competent and strategic government; 2. Great respect amongst the people for government and authority; 3. A deep commitment to society and social bonds rather than selfish individualism.

6/8 One small example. My son was in Seoul for 3 months: he didn't see a single person not wearing a mask outdoors. Covid has been largely dealt with. That's social discipline and respect. We lack a culture that believes society rather than the individual is paramount

7/8 It is no use simply putting the West's plight down to bad luck or an unpredictable disaster. The greatest test of government and societies is their ability to deal with such disasters, be they war or pandemics. It is clear that Western societies fundamentally lack resilience.

8/8 Western governments have failed miserably at being single-minded about the priority, eliminating the virus. They have failed to think strategically. They have failed to give leadership. And the people lack the kind of social discipline and social respect that is essential.