

Agribusiness and the The Four Horsemen Of The Apocalypse. The Globalized System of War, Poverty and Food Insecurity

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Theme: [Biotechnology and GMO](#)

US citizens constitute 5 percent of the world's population but consume 24 percent of global energy. On average, [one person in the US consumes as much energy as](#) two Japanese, six Mexicans, 13 Chinese, 31 Indians, 128 Bangladeshis, 307 Tanzanians and 370 Ethiopians.

The US is able to consume at such a level because the dollar serves as the world reserve currency. This means high demand for it is guaranteed as most international trade (especially oil) is carried out using the dollar. US dominance and wealth accumulation depends on maintaining the currency's leading role.

The international monetary system that emerged near the end of the Second World War was based on the US being the dominant economic power and the main creditor nation, with institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund eventually being created to serve its interests. Since coming off the gold standard in the early seventies, Washington has been able to run up a huge balance of payments deficit by using the (oil-backed) paper dollar as security in itself (rather than outright ownership of gold) and engaging in [petro-dollar recycling](#) and treasury-bond [super-imperialism](#).

Like all empires, Washington has developed a system to hitch a free ride courtesy of the rest of the world funding its generally high standard of living, militarism, financial bubbles, speculations and corporate takeovers.

With its [control and manipulation of](#) the World Bank, IMF and WTO, the US has been able to lever the trade and the financial system to its advantage by various means (for example, see [this](#) analysis of how Saudi Arabia's oil profits enabled Wall Street to entrap African nations into debt). Based on the US neocons' holy scriptures for 21st century war and imperialism - the [Project for a New American Century](#) and the [Wolfowitz doctrine](#) - Washington will not allow its global hegemony and the role of the dollar to be challenged. Given Russia's reemergence on the global stage and China's rise, we are witnessing a sense of urgency to destabilise and undermine both countries, especially as they are now increasingly bypassing the dollar when doing business.

US Strategic Objectives and the Role of Agribusiness

The only real alternative to avoid ecological meltdown due to the massive consumption of the planet's finite resources and ultimately what appears to be a [possible nuclear conflict](#) with Russia (or China) is to move away from militarism and resource-gabbing conflicts by reorganising economies so that nations live within their environmental means.

Key to this involves a major shift away from the petro-chemical industrial model of agriculture and food production, not only because it leads to [bad food, poor health and environmental degradation](#) and is ultimately [unsustainable](#) (and creates food insecurity – see link further on) but also because this model has underpinned a US resource-grabbing foreign policy agenda for many decades.

Such a shift would however run counter to the aims of Monsanto and the agribusiness cartel it belongs to. US agribusiness benefits financially from the prevailing order, continues to colonise global agriculture and is in effect part of the US Establishment (for example see [this](#) and [this](#)). Agriculture and agribusiness remain integral to US strategic objectives.

For example, the ‘green revolution’ was exported [courtesy of the oil-rich Rockefeller family](#), and poorer nations adopted agribusiness’s petrochemical-dependent agriculture that required loans for inputs and infrastructure development. This was underpinned by the propaganda that these countries would earn dollars to prosper (and repay the loans) by adopting mono-crop, export-oriented policies. It entailed uprooting traditional agriculture and trapping nations into a globalised system of debt bondage, rigged trade relations and the hollowing out and destruction of national and local economies.

GMOs, the control of seeds and further corporate-controlled inputs represent the second coming of the green revolution.

Around the world from [Mexico to India](#), we can see how traditional food production and retail sectors are being hijacked by mainly US corporate interests and can witness the subsequent impacts on health, food security, environments and livelihoods. NAFTA set the framework for plunder in Mexico, the Knowledge Initiative on Agriculture is playing a similar role in India and various bilateral trade agreements will do it elsewhere.

Thanks to the interests and demands of global agribusiness, farmers are leaving agriculture in India because it has been deliberately made [financially non viable to continue](#). Regardless of the impact of GM cotton, this is the main reason why 300,000 have committed suicide in the last two decades. In attempting to dismiss or play down the link between Bt cotton and farmer suicides, prominent neoliberal apologists should consider the role of the elite interests they represent in causing hardship, hunger, poverty and devastation, instead of setting out to [smear the likes of Vandana Shiva](#) or spending their time trying to sideline the issue by trying to debunk any GM-suicide link.

Although the globalized hijack of food and agriculture by powerful corporations results in [poverty, dependency and food insecurity](#), we are constantly and deceitfully informed that we must have more of the same if we are to feed an increasing global population and eradicate poverty. We are told that the solutions for feeding a projected world population of nine billion are more technical fixes: more petrochemical-dependent agriculture, more GMOs and more unnecessary shifting of food across the planet. Such a ‘solution’ [is bogus](#): we already produce enough food to feed the world’s population and did so even at the peak of the world food crisis in 2008, and GM crops that are on the market today are not designed to address hunger. Four GM crops account for almost 100 percent of worldwide GM crop acreage, and all four have been developed for large-scale industrial farming systems and are used as cash crops for export, to produce fuel or for processed food and animal feed. Of course, throw in a heavy dose of [‘family planning’](#) (depopulation) for the ‘third world’ and we will be just fine.

There is no better example of this ideology than the current propaganda over GM golden rice. The idea is to parachute corporate-controlled GM rice into regions thereby disrupting delicately balanced local economies designed for specific markets and potentially destroying livelihoods – especially when fortified beta-carotene GM rice eventually contaminates local varieties and is manipulated to become the preeminent variety. This corporate grab is legitimised by public relations figures mouthing platitudes about feeding the hungry and giving sight to children whose vitamin A deficient diet causes blindness. The solution for blindness involves policies that would encourage a more diverse agriculture and in the short term vitamin supplements.

Statements about curing blindness, saving lives or feeding the world with GMOs are meant to tug at the heartstrings. And attacking critics with emotive outbursts are intended to do the same. Even if there were an element of logic in what these figures say, abuse and emotion are no substitute for intellectual rigor and reasoned debate. Yet what we have are public relations people like Patrick Moore going on ‘world tours’ claiming that those who oppose golden rice are effectively stealing children’s sight or are killing them. Such accusations are designed to divert attention from the [underlying nature of poor nutrition/blindness and the real intention underlying the golden rice agenda](#) – a wholesale corporate grab of global rice production.

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

There is a prevailing notion that we can just continue as we are, with an endless supply of oil, endless supplies of meat and the endless assault on soil, human and environmental well-being that intensive petrochemical agriculture entails. Given the figures quoted at the start of this article, this is unsustainable and unrealistic and is a recipe for continued resource-driven conflicts and devastation.

The genuine answer is to adopt more organic and ecological farming systems that are locally based and less reliant on petrochemicals. This would also mean a shift away from an emphasis on producing meat that places a [massive burden on the environment](#) and is highly land, water and energy-input intensive.

The current economic system and model of globalisation and development suits the interests of **Western oil and financial oligarchs (including [land](#) and [commodity](#) - speculators), global agribusiness and the major arms companies. These interlocking, self-serving interests constitute the four horsemen of the modern-day apocalypse and through their actions have managed to institute a globalized system of war, poverty and food insecurity** and have acted to [devastate economies](#).

People want solutions for hunger, poverty and conflict but are too often told there is no alternative to what exists. The solution ultimately lies in taking manipulated markets and rigged trade rules out of farming and investing in and supporting indigenous knowledge, agroecology, education and infrastructure, instead of inappropriately diverting funds to [underperforming sectors](#). This involves rejecting big agritech’s current agenda and resisting the US strategy of using agriculture as a geopolitical tool. It involves [challenging the corporate takeover](#) of agriculture, supporting [food sovereignty movements](#) and embracing sustainable agriculture that is locally owned and rooted in the needs of communities.

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