

Civil Unrest in America?

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The Repression of Social Unrest. Source: BPK: Prussia Picture Archive

Eurasia is currently experiencing serious problems derived from financial and economic difficulties such as unemployment, GDP negative growth, currency depreciation, overall economic slowdown and so on. Several members of both the European Union and NATO (Poland, Hungary, Iceland come to mind) are already dealing with a considerable deal of domestic discontent. Some States from the Former Soviet Union (notably Ukraine, Belarus and the Central Asian Republics) and even Russia itself are facing similar problems. Even Chinese government officials acknowledge protests in the Chinese mainland, as pointed out by Professor Michael Klare, which means that East Asia is by no means an exception. As we shall see, financial and economic conditions are equally grave in the American hemisphere, if not more so.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, former National Security Advisor and early supporter of Barack Obama's presidential campaign, has warned that civil unrest on American soil is a possibility that should not be dismissed. Brzezinski explains that "[the United States is] *going to have millions and millions of unemployed, people really facing dire straits. And we're going to be having that for some period of time before things hopefully improve. And at the same time there is public awareness of this extraordinary wealth that was transferred to a few individuals at levels without historical precedent in America...*" Brzezinski concludes with this noteworthy remark "*...hell, there could be even riots*".

The aforementioned means that the upper echelons of the American political elite have realized that the current financial and economic turmoil is much worse than what many experts had foreseen, and that things could really spiral out of control if the present situation deteriorates even further. Indeed, optimistic signs are nowhere to be found. Quite the contrary.

The full magnitude of the financial tsunami is clearly reflected in a piece written by Barry Ritholtz, who states that the bailout plan promoted by former US Secretary of the Treasury Henry "*Hank*" Paulson amounts to a sum of money that is superior to the Louisiana Purchase, the New Deal, the Marshall Plan, the Apollo Lunar Project, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the invasion of Iraq and other large government expenditures - combined (!). This illustrates that America's top policymakers (both Democratic and Republican) hold serious concerns about the health of the American financial system and the American economy.

Lehman Brothers' bankruptcy (the largest in American history) was merely the tip of the iceberg and economic and financial conditions have dramatically worsened ever since. On January 22 2009, the Christian Science Monitor published that the four largest U.S. banks "*have lost half of their value since January 2.*" Moreover, in the period from summer 2008 to March 2009, the Dow Jones Industrial Average index has decreased more than 50%. Furthermore, during February 2009 alone, more than 651 000 jobs were lost in the US, whose unemployment rate has now reached 8.1 %, the highest in 26 years. Also, some US car manufacturers (such as Ford, General Motors and Chrysler), once the pride of America's industry, are practically on life support.

Steve Lohr, from the New York Times, writes that "*Some of the large banks in the United States, according to economists and other finance experts, are like dead men walking.*" Indeed, there were only two investment banks left: Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs and their condition is not exactly solid because they have managed to survive by becoming ordinary commercial banks. The Guardian reproduces an assessment by Bill Isaac, an experienced financial expert; he claims that the transformation of both Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs is "*a shame because this country [the US] was built, in part, on risk-taking by Goldman and Morgan and by a whole bunch of firms before them.*" Karl West, from the Daily Mail mentions that financial specialists warn that mammoth bank Citigroup "*could collapse*".

All of the above indicates that the much-feared financial meltdown is no longer a distant and remote possibility because in fact it is already taking place. However, this chaos might trigger some very serious and preoccupying consequences. In order to have a clear understanding of these implications, it is vital to take into account some reports that were not given the proper amount of attention they deserved when they were first published.

Professor Michel Chossudovsky observed that the US Army 3rd Infantry's 1st Brigade Combat Team returned from Iraq some months ago. That information is extremely disturbing because such military unit "may be called upon to help with civil unrest and crowd control", according to official sources. Now, what scenario could possibly require the operational deployment of said units on American soil? Professor Chossudovsky puts forward an intriguing hypothesis that must be borne in mind. He argues that "Civil unrest resulting from from the financial meltdown is a distinct possibility, given the broad impacts of financial collapse on lifelong savings, pension funds, homeownership, etc".

Shortly afterwards, the [Centre for Research on Globalization website](#) posted an article written by Wayne Madsen. Mr. Madsen claims that a highly confidential official report has been circulating among senior members of the US Congress and their top advisors. The report has been allegedly nicknamed as the "C & R document". The author stipulates that those letters stand for none other than "conflict" and "revolution" because those scenarios are supposedly regarded by America's policymakers as plausible consequences triggered by a financial meltdown. According to Mr. Madsen, the content of the document reveals that severe financial chaos could spark a major war if Washington refuses to honor its foreign debt and/or massive riots in US cities if the American population does not accept a considerable tax increase.

For decades, overall political stability in the US was taken for granted. However, as it has been pointed out, even senior American statesmen are taking into consideration that financial volatility could fuel a wave of discontent which could easily reach troubling proportions. It seems that America itself is not immune from "regime-threatening instability" as the Pentagon and the American intelligence community terms it. It is likely that American government officials have not dismissed the worst-case scenario. Indeed it looks like they have been preparing accordingly.

Therefore, as has been scrutinized here, once one proceeds to connect the dots a very dark picture begins to emerge, to say the least. An all-encompassing cloud of uncertainty prevents us from formulating an accurate forecast regarding what developments will occur and how they will unfold during the next few months, let alone years. The only thing that can be taken for granted and that one can be sure of is that the unthinkable has now become thinkable.

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