

Corona Pandemic: Oligarchs and Politicians Do Not Let a Crisis Go to Waste

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Strict measures -even extraordinary ones- are of course required to deal with the tumult flowing from an unleashed global pandemic.

But the people must be watchful and remain ever vigilant of the conduct of their leaders. There will be threats related to state restrictions on personal freedom, as well as those in the sphere of economics.

For instance, the funds released to several large corporate concerns do not strike me as being borne out of necessity. Indeed, in certain instances there is more than a whiff of suspicion that some banks and corporations are using bail out money as a means of covering the losses they have accrued in recent times; losses which several analysts believe was threatening a new recession along the lines of the one which followed the near economic collapse of 2008. On that occasion, several American investment banks and corporations which ought to have been wound up and their directors jailed, were given monies by the Federal Government.

The \$2 Trillion package earmarked by President Donald Trump which includes a \$32 Billion bailout of airlines and \$25 Million to an arts centre for lost ticket sales may be repugnant to those taxpayers who will fund the package. It was agreed upon before any consensus was reached as to the implementation of a UBI (Universal Basic Income) package for Americans.

It is not only the oligarchs who are in effect profiting from a general situation of misfortune. The discovery that a number of US politicians had dumped their stocks shows how those in privileged positions can abuse their office because of their access to information not within the public domain.

Political leaders who were facing long-standing difficulties will doubtless seek to use the situation to their advantage. Emmanuel Macron in France now has the opportunity to control the Yellow Vest Movement, while Binyamin Netanyahu in Israel can stave off the criminal indictment hanging over his head.

People need to remember that history is replete with situations where the state and the officials of state have been given powers under emergency situations, which were not officially revoked when 'normality' resumed. J. Edgar Hoover, the long-term head of the American Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is one example. Hoover expanded his jurisdiction and power during the 1930s and then the 1940s courtesy of President Franklin Roosevelt, who in the first instance wanted the FBI to spy on political extremists (communists and fascists) and later, under conditions of war, to deal with threats related to sabotage, subversion and espionage. Hoover of course went on to use these powers in the

post war years to entrench his position by spying on politicians and conducting surveillance against political and social movements to which he was opposed.

The threat of the coronavirus is thus not limited to biological harm. The response to it may likely have important ramifications in regard to personal liberties, as well as the economic well-being of nations whose oligarchs through their political servants are already engaged in securing their wealth at the expense of the mass of people.

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