

Targeting Toyota: US Economic War Directed Against Japan

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Does anyone really believe that Toyota is being pilloried in the media for a few highway fatalities?

Nonsense. If Congress is so worried about innocent people getting killed, then why haven't they indicted US commander Stanley McChrystal for blowing up another 27 Afghan civilians on Sunday?

But this isn't about bloodshed and it's certainly not "safety regulations". It's about politics-bare-knuckle Machiavellian politics. An attack on Toyota is an attack on Japan's leading export. It is an act of war. Here's an excerpt from the New York Times which explains what is really going on:

"The Japanese economy has emerged from its worst recession since World War II, but is still reeling. Japan must do more to lift its economy out of deflation and boost long-term growth", S.&P. said.

"The outlook change reflects our view that the Japanese government's diminishing economic policy flexibility may lead to a downgrade unless measures can be taken to stem fiscal and deflationary pressures," S.&P. said. "The policies of the new Democratic Party of Japan government point to a slower pace of fiscal consolidation than we had previously expected."

President Barack Obama is expected to address similar worries in the United States on Wednesday, with a call for a freeze in spending on many domestic programs, a move he hopes will quell perceptions that government spending is out of control. Fiscal problems in Greece and Ireland have also helped put the spotlight on the issue of national debt." ("Japan's High Debt Prompts Credit Rating Warning", HIROKO TABUCHI AND BETTINA WASSENER, NY Times)

Japan's new liberal government is fighting deflation using the traditional methodology, by lowering interest rates and increasing fiscal stimulus. But that's not what Washington wants. Neoliberal policymakers and their buddies in the right-wing think tanks want "fiscal consolidation" which means harsh austerity measures that will deepen the recession, increase unemployment, and trigger a wave of defaults and bankruptcies. This is how western corporatists and bank tycoons keep their thumb on the developing world and thrust their economies into perennial crisis. It's the "shock doctrine" and it's been the IMF's modus operandi for over 20 years. Japan is being stuffed into a fiscal straight-jacket by supporters of the Washington consensus whose goal is to weaken government and accelerate the

privatization of public assets and services.

The ratings agencies are being used in the same way as the media; to wage an economic/guerrilla war on Japan and force the administration to rethink their economic policies. (Note: There is no chance that Japan will default on its debt because it pays its debts in its own currency and has large foreign exchange reserves of over \$1 trillion) The attacks on Toyota are a way of showing Tokyo what happens to countries that fail to obey Washington's orders.

Here's a clip from the New York Times which sums up the problem in a nutshell:

The government of Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama has "bolstered spending on social programs aimed at helping households.....The powerful lower house of parliament approved a supplementary budget for the fiscal year that ends in March worth ¥7.2 trillion, or \$80.3 billion, to help shore up the economy...And next year, government spending will grow further with a record trillion-dollar budget including ambitious welfare outlays. (New York Times)

Western elites will not tolerate economic policies which raise the standard of living for the average working slob. "Social programs" or "welfare outlays" are anathema to their trickle down, Voodoo capitalist orthodoxy. What they want is upward redistribution and class warfare. Regrettably, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama has put himself at odds with US powerbrokers and is feeling the full measure of their wrath. His public approval ratings have plummeted to 37 percent and are headed downward still. The message is simple: Cross Washington and you're a goner.

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