

The Worsening U.S. Failure

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At the recent climate change conference in Copenhagen, attended by more than 2,500 researchers and economists, studies have been presented portraying a world in which there is a strong possibility that fifty percent of the Earth's surface could become uninhabitable in the not too distant future, a slight shift upward in temperature could let loose a carbon "time bomb" from arctic soils, crop yield losses could be thirty percent or more on several continents by 2030, seventy-five percent of the Amazon forest cover would be totally destroyed by a three degree C. boost for more than a century and a staggering amount of methane stored for millions of years in permafrost is rapidly entering the atmosphere of which there exists approximately 70 billion tonnes of it in the Siberian bog alone with global estimates tabulated to be between 300 billion and 500 billion tonnes [1]. (Many scientists consider that a 4 degree C. temperature climb is the minimum amount that can be expected based on the carbon load spewed out to date into the air and water bodies around the world.)

At the same time, Lester Brown warns of the looming large scale conflicts that will arise over dwindling water supplies, paucity of food and lacks of other basic necessities [2] while the UN Population Division reports that the human population will exceed 9 billion in 2050, representing a fifty percent increase from the 6.7 billion people currently alive today [3]. Moreover, all of these assorted, although interconnected, difficulties are occurring at a time during which oceans are losing a huge amount of life due to high levels of acidification and other human induced impacts while close to one third of all species known to man have already become extinct between 1970 and 2005 [4]. Furthermore, demand for energy continues to surpass provision in a world that must largely discontinue fossil fuel use with an immediate all-out effort to prevent a run-away climate catastrophe of the sort that could render much of the Earth incapable of supporting life.

In light of overall environmental degradation, ever larger human population, ongoing major resource depletion, over-consumption of products that have been overproduced by too small a work force to involve full employment and climate change effects all increasing in their impacts, it seems likely that the worldwide economy will never completely recover and expand. Certainly cutbacks in both economic and population growth are absolutely necessary to curtail further ruin of the natural world on which all life ultimately depends for its continued survival.

Meanwhile, wealth will continue to flow to the top ultra-affluent elite while siphoned off of the middle and lower classes through various schemes like company managers outsourcing jobs to lowest wage populations whose salaries barely sustain them while finished products are marked up a hundred percent or more. Concurrently, further financial bailouts will continue to prop up outrageously high salaries, along with other schemes being

implemented jointly by government and business leaders so that the upper class is enriched at the expense of everyone else [5].

In addition, military force, if deemed needed in homelands, will likely be used to quell the unrest that will start breaking out when people face severe food insecurity and home foreclosures on a far greater scale than is currently present. Simultaneously, the debt load carried by many of the bankrupted governments will be so great as to render them unable to ease many of the crises faced by typical, at risk citizens as climate and economic hardships deepen based on a deteriorating natural world whose resources have been used up faster than the replenishment rate for fish, fresh water, lumber and other critical provisions.

It would seem that such an array of alarming factors would create huge unrest in the U.S., such as has taken place in many other countries like France that recently faced strikes and organized marches involving more than a million workers [6]. However, most Americans, having been trained in schools and by society in general to be passive and obedient, have not as yet gotten angry unlike so many others across the globe.

Instead, they, apparently, keep hoping and patiently expecting that President Obama and his cohorts will correct all of the myriad staggering problems confronting America and they do not know that our public servants, for the most part, cannot do so as the difficulties are far too great and varied to successfully address. As such, these officials will simply continue most of the major policies that recent prior administrations have carried out, including expansion of the resource wars in the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere so as to ensure adequate supply of petrol for the U.S. military, the single biggest user of oil in the world, and availability of raw materials for American favored companies. They will, also, maintain support of globally oriented business ventures in multiple other ways, continue to shore up failed financial institutions and their avaricious advocates, pander to K Street expectations and largely ignore the urgency required to prevent ever more average Americans being progressively crushed by the financial downturn.

Similarly, our government representatives will not go all out to support alternative energy sources being put in place as fully and quickly as possible, along with ratifying on the scale needed other measures to stymie energy leaks and promote limits in use. However, what could be expected from these leaders when the continuance of day to day Congressional operations indirectly are, in large measure, funded by government owned Chinese companies through Treasury bond purchases and whose managers fully expect that, when the recession is mostly ended, Americans will once again fully resume their high rate of purchase of Chinese made goods? Could anyone really imagine Barack Obama stating that U.S. financial and other globally oriented institutions represent failed unworkable models for business when the ideal moment presented itself after Wall Street initially tanked? Could he be pictured stating that Americans should focus upon developing local, small scale industries, farms and banks that enhance communities, create a sufficient number of jobs and ensure environmental well being since people tend to look after their own group and surroundings? (They'd have to be incredibly cavalier to willingly destroy their own water sources, fisheries, forests and agricultural lands in a bid for immediate fiscal gain in lieu of keeping long term continuation in mind.)

Nonetheless, such a switch in scale, one away from transnational commerce, is necessary to foster sustainable lifestyles, limits in product importation (which requires lavish use

of fossil fuel in transportation) curtailment in consumption of unnecessary goods, development of reasonable wages, full employment and improvements in the natural world. The latter outcome arises from the simple fact that people are more careful in resource use when their livelihoods and, inevitably, incomes are dependent on maintenance of a robust surrounding habitat from which they derive their living.

In a similar vein, it is hard for buyers to tabulate the environmental cost for imported goods. One can never see the devastation behind the abundance of products spread out across stores like super Wal-Marts as the conditions, such as DDT use, at the source are generally hidden from view. In addition, such a downscale move is clearly preferable to continuation of a pattern wherein jobs are mostly created for the lowest paid and highest paid workers — the sweat shop and field laborers in developing countries and the affluent owners of the international companies for which the poverty stricken drudges slave.

At the same time, it should come as no surprise that any company CEO or CFO would pick locations for overseas activities that have little or no environmental and worker safety regulations, nor chance for lawsuits being brought when workers are hurt or killed on the job. After all, they are expensive to handle as was discovered from data collected at any former sites (i.e., any American factories) before jobs shifted offshore. So outsourcing labor is clearly lucrative from many standpoints beyond simple wage issues.

Consequently, one has to ask: Are these predatory practices improving humanity and the world as a whole? Does not ongoing economic growth, unless very carefully carried out, rob the Earth away from our children, grandchildren and subsequent generations? Are not many of our politicians so caught up in the frenzy, glittering allurements and greed of corporate culture that they forget their chief responsibilities and the reason that they hold office? Did they let slip from memory the mandates to protect and uplift the quality of life for all of their constituents and strengthen the nation overall?

Even if the answers to these questions are negative, there probably won't be much by way of any real protest in America about governmental plans, including ones that encouraged U.S. based companies to situate operations off of American soil, until it becomes too late to monumentally change anything. In other words, there will be no wide scale objection to bad programs until it is way after the fact in the great hoodwinking of the public.

Meanwhile, the ever mounting costs for enlarging the war efforts and the ongoing bailout of transnational corporations, in tandem, drain huge sums of money away from provision of quality universal healthcare, reasonable Social Security payout, adequate Medicare and Medicaid benefits, quality public education, sufficient support of alternative energy initiatives, the strengthening of industry and agriculture on the home front, and other programs required to empower U.S.A. and its citizens. Indeed, it is conceivable that, at some point, government representatives will simply declare that there is little money left to give towards general welfare while they and their kleptocratic cronies walk away, literally walk away, with their millions and billions of dollars made off of the armaments industry [7], consulting fees, bailout bonuses, high salaries and other perks from making the sorts of decisions that have been, by and large, disastrous for the majority of Americans and many others across the world, who have to deal with the consequences of unbridled U.S. military and industrial excursions in their own countries.

At the same time, it becomes increasingly noticeable that the “big business” model is

successful primarily because it's proponents ruin the land, waterways and atmosphere by taking all that can be snapped up as fully as possible with companies moving on to new sites to plunder when the earlier ones are exhausted in whatever materials were eked out from them whether they are minerals, metals, fish, timber or whatever else is removed. In exchange, often toxins, such as poisonous sludge from mining operations in the water supply, are left behind, along with depleted soil that needs, if it is still to be used, to be pumped with a tremendous load of manmade chemicals to force it back into service.

Similarly, local populations are left to cope with the aftermath at the point that their surroundings are so heavily destroyed that they can barely sustain themselves, such as occurs when whole forests are clear cut, mountaintops are blown up to obtain coal, strip mining tears up land for as far as the eye can see or a fishing zone has collapsed in entirety through stock depletion. In tandem, typical corporate policy is not to offer reasonable payment for raw materials so that money can be returned to improve local conditions. Instead, the lucre is simply pocketed by distant company managers and stockholders, who tend not to care one iota about the welfare of the communities from which their resources and employee pool originate.

In an analogous vein, the customers for the finished products are also "taken for a ride." Clearly, they are charged an exorbitant amount more than the cost to produce in order to further enhance management and stockholders' profits in the trillions of dollars.

In the end, such patterns absolutely take unfair advantage of the common workers, the purchasers and assorted eco-niches with only one main goal — that of making a financial killing as much as can be achieved. In addition, what will be left for future generations given the quickening pace with which the related planetary ruin is happening?

Tragically too many U.S. government officials are personally invested in the current financial and military programs to address the critical needs of our nation and the world relative to full employment, resource diminishment, support of the natural habits, population growth and climate change while knowing fully well the dire consequences of their neglect. They are deliberately putting the present and future generations at risk for their own private aims. As such, their blatant disregard represents a failure of the worst sort conceivable.

By their refusal to take the lead in preparing the U.S.A. and the world in general for vastly harder times ahead and by their not trying their utmost best to offset the difficulties as much as possible now, they show nothing short of gross ineptitude verging perhaps on criminality. Especially this is the case as they continue to loot the nation on behalf of Wall Street and global consortiums alike rather than earnestly serve the people who voted them into office.

At the same time, the majority of U.S. citizens, themselves, are to blame for their leaders' dereliction of duty. Sadly, the public has not sufficiently demanded accountability.

Nonetheless, Americans can try to keep money in their communities by purchasing regionally made goods as much as possible, involve in activities that create local industry and agricultural ventures, and attempt to delimit their involvement in anything having to do with the sorts of gargantuan commercial enterprises that, obviously, were created for one purpose only — to benefit the oligarchs at the expense of everyone else. Naturally, these actions can take place at the same time that people rise up

to collectively command that government officials follow their lead.

Yet, they don't, for now, appear capable to do so. All considered, they have forgotten Andrew Jackson's caution: "But you must remember, my fellow-citizens, that eternal vigilance by the people is the price of liberty, and that you must pay the price if you wish to secure the blessing. It behooves you, therefore, to be watchful in your States as well as in the Federal Government." Instead, they seem only too willing to passively accept worsening peril rather than to courageously press for radical changes so that their nation can be set on a new and better course.

This in mind, they must in unison begin to soon insist that human and planetary well being be valued, along with profits. If not, we and future generations will all pay the price — one that will, without doubt, be far too great to bear.

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