

Climate Change, Economic Crisis and the Violence of War

"Nuclear, ecological, chemical, economic — our arsenal of Death by Stupidity is impressive for a species as smart as Homo sapiens"

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The hurricanes, the typhoons, the heat waves ... the droughts, the heavy rains, the floods ... ever more powerful, ever new records being set.

Something must be done of course. Except if you don't believe at all that it's man-made. But if there's even a small chance that the greenhouse effect is driving the changes, is it not plain that, at a minimum, we have to err on the side of caution? There's too much at stake. Like civilization as we know it. Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere must be greatly curtailed.



Why does Barack Obama not pursue the battle against climate change with the same intensity he pursues war? Why does he not seek to punish the American bankers and stockbrokers responsible for the financial calamity as much as he seeks to punish Julian Assange and Bradley Manning?

In both cases he's putting the interests of the corporate world before anything else. No amount of fines or penalties will induce corporate leaders to modify their behavior. Only spending some hard time in a prison cellblock might cause the growth in them of their missing part, the part that's shaped like a social conscience.

Only prosecuting George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, and their partners in bombing and torture will discourage future American war lovers from following in their bloody footsteps.

The recent election result can only embolden Obama. He likely took it as an affirmation of his policies, although only 29.3% of those eligible to vote actually voted for him. And an unknown, but certainly significant, number of those who did so held their nose while voting for the supposed lesser of two evils. Hardly indicative of impassioned support for his policies.

Last week the United Nations Climate Summit was held in Doha, Qatar. The comments which came from many of the activists (as opposed to various government officials) were doomsdayish ... "Time is running out ... time has already run out ... the climate has already changed ... Hurricane Sandy, rising sea levels, the worst is yet to come." The Kyoto protocol is still the only international treaty stipulating cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. It's a touchstone for many environmentalists. But the United States has never ratified it. At the previous conferences in Copenhagen and Durban, the US blocked important global action and failed to honor vital pledges.

At the Doha conference the US was acutely criticized for failing to take the lead on planet protection, especially in light of its standing as the largest historic contributor to the current levels of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere. ("The most obdurate bully in the room", declared the Indian environmentalist, Sunita Narain. ²)

What motivates the American representatives, now as before, as ever, is concern about corporate profits. Cutting back on greenhouse gas emissions can hurt the bottom line. A suitable epitaph for the earth's tombstone. Shamus Cooke, writing on ZSpace, sums it up well: "Thus, if renewable energy is not as profitable as oil — and it isn't — then the majority of capitalist investing will continue to go towards destroying the planet. It really is that simple. Even the best-intentioned capitalists do not throw their money away on non-growth investments."

A brief history of Superpowers

From the Congress of Vienna of 1815 to the Congress of Berlin in 1878 to the "Allies" invasion of Russia in 1918 to the formation of what became the European Union in the 1950s, the great powers of Europe and the world have gotten together in grand meeting halls and on the field of battle to set the ground rules for imperialist exploitation of Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Australasia, to Christianize and 'civilize', to remake the maps, and to suppress revolutions and other threats to great-power hegemony. They have been deadly serious. In 1918, for example, some 13 nations, including France, Great Britain, Rumania, Italy, Serbia, Greece, Japan, and the United States, combined in a military invasion of Russia to "strangle at its birth" the nascent Bolshevik state, as Winston Churchill so charmingly put it.

And following World War 2, without any concern about who had fought and died to win that war, the Western powers, *sans* the Soviet Union, moved to create the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. NATO, along with the European Union, then joined the United States in carrying out the Cold War and preventing the Communists and their allies from coming to power legally through elections in France and Italy. That partnership continued after the formal end of the Cold War. The United States, the European Union, and NATO are each superpowers, with extensive military, as well as foreign policy integration — almost all EU members are also members of NATO; almost all NATO members in Europe are in the EU; almost all NATO members have had a military contingent serving under NATO and/or the US in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Balkans and elsewhere.

Together, this Holy Triumvirate has torn apart Yugoslavia, invaded and devastated Afghanistan and Iraq, crippled Iran, Cuba and others with sanctions, overthrown the Libyan government, and are on the verge now of the same in Syria. Much of what the Triumvirate has told the world to justify this wanton havoc has concerned Islamic terrorism, but it should be noted that prior to the interventions in Iraq, Libya and Syria all three countries were

secular and modern. Will the people of those sad lands ever see that life again?

In suppressing the left in France and Italy, and later in destabilizing the governments of Libya and Syria, the Holy Triumvirate has closely aligned itself with terrorists and terrorist methods to a remarkable extent. ³ In Syria alone, it would be difficult to name any Middle East terrorist group associated with al Qaeda — employing their standard car bombings and suicide bombers — that is not taking part in the war against President Assad with the support of the Triumvirate. Is there anything — legally or morally — the Triumvirate regards as outside its purview? Any place not within its geographical mandate? Britain and France have now joined Turkey and Arabian Peninsula states in recognizing a newly formed opposition bloc as the sole representative of the Syrian people. “From the point of view of international law, this is absolutely unacceptable,” Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev declared. “A desire to change the political regime of another state by recognizing a political force as the sole carrier of sovereignty seems to me to be not completely civilised.” France was the first Western state to recognize the newly-formed Syrian National Coalition and was swiftly joined by Britain, Italy and the European Union. ⁴ The neck irons tighten.

The European Union in recent years has been facing a financial crisis, where its overriding concern has been to save the banks, not its citizens, inspiring calls from the citizenry of some member states to leave the Union. I think the dissolution of the European Union would benefit world peace by depriving the US/NATO mob of a guaranteed partner in crime by returning to the Union’s members their individual discretion in foreign policy.

And then we can turn to getting rid of NATO, an organization that not only has a questionable *raison d’être* in the present, but never had any good reason-to-be in the past other than serving as Washington’s hit man. ⁵

The United Nations vote on the Cuba embargo — 21 years in a row

For years American political leaders and media were fond of labeling Cuba an “international pariah”. We don’t hear that any more. Perhaps one reason is the annual vote in the United Nations General Assembly on the resolution which reads: “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”. This is how the vote has gone (not including abstentions):

Year	Votes (Yes-No)	No Votes
1992	59-2	US, Israel
1993	88-4	US, Israel, Albania, Paraguay
1994	101-2	US, Israel
1995	117-3	US, Israel, Uzbekistan
1996	138-3	US, Israel, Uzbekistan
1997	143-3	US, Israel, Uzbekistan
1998	157-2	US, Israel
1999	155-2	US, Israel
2000	167-3	US, Israel, Marshall Islands
2001	167-3	US, Israel, Marshall Islands
2002	173-3	US, Israel, Marshall Islands
2003	179-3	US, Israel, Marshall Islands

2004179-4	US, Israel, Marshall Islands, Palau
2005182-4	US, Israel, Marshall Islands, Palau
2006183-4	US, Israel, Marshall Islands, Palau
2007184-4	US, Israel, Marshall Islands, Palau
2008185-3	US, Israel, Palau
2009187-3	US, Israel, Palau
2010187-2	US, Israel
2011186-2	US, Israel
2012188-3	US, Israel, Palau

* * *

Each fall the UN vote is a welcome reminder that the world has not *completely* lost its senses and that the American empire does not *completely* control the opinion of other governments.

How it began: On April 6, 1960, Lester D. Mallory, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, wrote in an internal memorandum: "The majority of Cubans support Castro ... The only foreseeable means of alienating internal support is through disenchantment and disaffection based on economic dissatisfaction and hardship. ... every possible means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the economic life of Cuba." Mallory proposed "a line of action which ... makes the greatest inroads in denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government." ⁶ Later that year, the Eisenhower administration instituted the suffocating embargo against its eternally-declared enemy.

Placing American presidents in their proper context

"Once upon a time there was a radical president who tried to remake American society through government action. In his first term he created a vast network of federal grants to state and local governments for social programs that cost billions. He set up an imposing agency to regulate air and water emissions, and another to regulate workers' health and safety. Had Congress not stood in his way he would have gone much further. He tried to establish a guaranteed minimum income for all working families and, to top it off, proposed a national health plan that would have provided government insurance for low-income families, required employers to cover all their workers and set standards for private insurance. Thankfully for the country, his second term was cut short and his collectivist dreams were never realize.

His name was Richard Nixon." ⁷

Films on US foreign policy

The Power Principle is a series of three films by Scott Noble. Part one, "Empire", is the only one I've seen completely so far and I can say that it's great stuff. The three parts, with their times, are:

- [Part 1: Empire](#) (1h 35m)
- [Part 2: Propaganda](#) (1h 38m)
- [Part 3: Apocalypse](#) (1h 10m)

Featured in the films are Noam Chomsky, Michael Parenti, John Stockwell, Christopher

Simpson, Ralph McGehee, Philip Agee, Nafeez Ahmed, John Perkins, James Petras, John Stauber, Russ Baker, Howard Zinn, William Blum, Nancy Snow, William I. Robinson, Morris Berman, Peter Phillips, Michael Albert, and others of the usual suspects.

To comment about these films or others by Scott Noble, write to him at dmacab9@hotmail.com.

Much more publicized is the new film and book by Oliver Stone and Peter Kuznick. Entitled [*The Untold History of the United States*](#), it is a 10-part series appearing on *Showtime*. Only Stone's name could get this dark side of US history and foreign policy on mainstream television. It will be interesting to observe what the mass media has to say about this challenge to some of America's most cherished beliefs about itself.

Notes

1. Jeanette Winterson, *The New York Times*, September 17, 2009 [↗]
2. *Democracy Now!*, December 7, 2012 [↗]
3. For France and Italy, see [Operation Gladio](#) Wikipedia; and Daniele Ganser, *Operation Gladio: NATO's Top Secret Stay-Behind Armies and Terrorism in Western Europe* (2005) [↗]
4. *Agence France Presse*, November 26, 2012[↗]
5. For the best coverage of the NATO monolith, sign up with StopNATO. To get on the mailing list write to Rick Rozoff at r_rozoff@yahoo.com. To see back issues at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/stopnato> [↗]
6. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume VI, Cuba* (1991), p.885 [↗]
7. From the review of the book: *I am the change: Barack Obama and the Crisis of Liberalism* by Charles Kesler. Review by Mark Lilla, *The New York Times Book Review*, September 30, 2012, p.1 [↗]

William Blum is the author of:

- *Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War 2*
- *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*
- *West-Bloc Dissident: A Cold War Memoir*
- *Freeing the World to Death: Essays on the American Empire*

Portions of the books can be read, and signed copies purchased, at www.killinghope.org

Previous Anti-Empire Reports can be read at this website.

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