

The Emerging Dystopian Republic:

Systems Engineering the Human from Birth thru Death

by John Stanton

The [systems engineering](#) discipline is at once an exceptional holistic and precision tool for conceptualizing, designing, fielding, maintaining, upgrading and recycling systems as diverse as handheld mobile communications devices, the Internet/WWW, urban transportation systems, and US military weapons systems like an aircraft carrier. Generally speaking, the systems engineering methodology considers the entire life cycle of the system/product from beginning to end. The life cycle process must account for other key inputs: materials, human/humans, labor, time, funding, costs/prices, operational environment, disposal, etc.

A critical determinant in the overall systems engineering process is often the role of human capital: Where does the human fit into the system? What kind of human can the system tolerate? How much will it cost to integrate the human into the system? What will it cost to train the human to function within or with a complex system? Is the human necessary to the functioning of the system? Where are system-friendly humans to be found?

The systems engineering discipline's holistic tool must be employed to look beyond the large-scale system, machine or mega-city, that can be constructed, maintained and managed, and answer another set of pertinent questions. What is the system of culture, politics, and economy—the totality—in which complex communications networks, machines, mega-cities, nuclear weapons, militaries, political parties, rules/regulations, and people, places and things, etc., operate and exist? And what are the characteristics of the system in its totality that engenders the development of new subsystems within that larger system? What endogenous and exogenous influences prompt the system in totality or its subsystems to engage in constructive and/or destructive activity?

Survival of the System

Here in the United States there is a significant convergence of events that together are catalyzing the development of a future dystopian, deterministic republic. The survival of this system—and its primary mission to retain unmatched global military and economic dominance--will depend largely on channeling individuals, and clusters of individuals, into life-slots to meet the system's needs, not individual aspirations based on some mythical American dream (which, like the Gods of old, will eventually fade away). Individuals/groups will be subjected to life-long genetic testing, health monitoring and performance based measurements of effectiveness at study, work or play.

They will be engineered to support the system.

The engineering of human systems will begin with the cultivation, testing and monitoring of male and female genomic material, the fetus in test tube, utero or incubator, and on through formal educational stages (college only for the few) continuing into the workplace, retirement and even death (what is the cheapest way to die and dispose of the body?). In short, individuals/groups life cycles will be subjected to necessarily intrusive systems engineering practices. The dystopian, deterministic republic's survival and mission success will depend on the discipline of systems engineering and the discipline of

acceptance by individuals/groups. Educating individuals/groups to the design and purpose of the dystopian, deterministic republic is essential, but more on that later.

Such statements conjure up any number of texts in science fiction and film: *We*, 1984, *Brave New World*, *Clockwork Orange*, *Soylent Green*, *Blade Runner*, *GATTACA* and hundreds more. The dystopian, deterministic republic may contain elements of the authors/directors notions of dystopian society as portrayed in their works but, at the moment, it's difficult to envision any salvation for humanity through fantastical computing technologies and medical breakthroughs. Indeed, as Nick Bostrom points out in his book [Superintelligence](#), when the machines become aware and intelligent, they are likely to do away with humanity.

There are dozens of visible currents leading to a unique convergence which will ignite the rapid development of the dystopian, deterministic republic. Three currents are listed below but are in no particular order, though they are all interconnected with synergies between each. They exist, like all things under the American sun, within the universe of neoliberal capitalism which uses people, places and things, to include the US Constitution, to advance the interests of those with the power and wealth to manipulate, if not the total system, then large subsystems within it. One example is the currency speculation of George Soros who "[broke the Bank of England.](#)"

Three Currents

The first is the Internet/WWW of Things and People or, in clearer terms, Ubiquitous Intelligent Machine and Human Sensors located in globalized public and private space. Machines and humans record, store and share activity which is surveilled, tracked and shared by the autonomous tracking machinery of government and commercial enterprises. Adult humans willingly provide non-Internet data that will be their children's undoing. For example, US federal, local and state governments fund the operation of P-20 education data collection and [database development](#) based on measures of performance and, in some cases, medical data. From pre-school to 20 years of age, this data is collected and tracked and shared with post-secondary education institutions, policy planners, corporations/businesses, think tanks, polling groups, and the National Security apparatus. Beyond the obvious uses, the data is used, in some cases, for "[educational intelligence](#)" used to predict what student/students are at risk and, of course, who or what is putting them at risk (teachers, parents, neighbors, organization, etc.).

The second is [Plutocratic Dominance](#) of Political and Economic Power Centers. Robert Reich's book *Saving Capitalism* (2015) documents the overrunning of what he calls the five building blocks of capitalism and democracy by the wealthy and powerful. This results in the damming of channels through which 70 percent of Americans used to wield "countervailing power". According to Reich, the five building blocks of capitalism are "Property (what can be owned); Monopoly (what degree of market power is permissible), Contract (what can be bought and sold, and on what terms); Bankruptcy (what happens when purchasers can't pay up); and Enforcement (how to make sure no one cheats on any of these rules)."

Each of the five blocks is largely dominated by individuals and organizations who have access to funds that can be used to lobby and litigate for their own business interests. Examples include keeping wages stagnant, raiding pension funds, privatizing public education, lax antitrust enforcement, buying politicians through cash contributions, waging protracted litigation as a cost of doing business, union

busting, etc. Plutocrats seek the roll back of New Deal and Great Society programs, and any modern versions of them (food stamps, unemployment compensation, Social Security/Medicare, etc.).

The third is the De-Sovereignization of Household and National Boundaries by US political, military and economic leaders. This means, for Americans, the elimination of the Fourth Amendment to the US Constitution. In like manner, American political and military leaders have unilaterally erased long standing borders between nations and blatantly ignore the quaint notions of international law. This is openly stated by President Obama in his national security strategies and speeches. President Obama, like all of his predecessors, has indicated that the US will advance its interests regardless of the entreaties or actions of other nations. If there is such a thing as a Fourth Amendment in international law that other nations feel they have codified to thwart US intrusions into their societies, homes and communications, they are badly mistaken.

Looney Tunes Country

The US has been on a global rampage since 911 like the [Tasmanian devil](#) portrayed in the cartoon series Looney Tunes. The “Americans are coming” strikes fear and loathing around the globe. There is a difference between the activities of the US government and international corporations in the 21st Century and the 20th Century’s Cold War. During the latter conflict the USA felt compelled to keep its involvement in the overthrow of governments in Central and South America, Iran, Italy, Congo, etc., classified and quiet.

But now such activity is in-your-face, publicized and supported by mainstream media outlets. Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen come to mind as direct and overt military/intelligence operations promoted publically through the fusion of military information support operations and civilian strategic communications that affected and distorted civilian media reportage and, hence, the American public’s perceptions of the geopolitical dynamics involved and at risk. Since the US Congress and Supreme Court are largely ignorant of the complexities involved in such matters, they are no different that the masses in the general public. It’s worth mentioning that the past decade has been the deadliest for journalists in terms of killings and the elimination of foreign and domestic reporters/editors through layoffs.

Leaders in the USA have stood idly by, smiling even, as Bahrain and Egypt brutalized protestors there seeking basic human rights. Indeed, the similarities between those events and the shooting deaths of Black teenagers by rogue law enforcement personnel in Missouri, Maryland, Ohio, New York, etc., is typically met with an “oh, well” by American leadership. The elite’s thinking goes something like this: What’s 16,000 Americans murdered each year, millions of American children and adults in poverty, millions more unemployed or under employed, the destruction of the middle class, income disparity, crumbling infrastructure, and hundreds of thousands of military veterans suffering have to do with me?

Americans roam the planet via unmanned aerial vehicles and special forces in search of rag-tag groupings of “terrorists” and maniacal drug lords who are deemed existential security threats to a country, the USA, with a \$17 trillion GDP a year economy and a domestic and national security apparatus (law enforcement, homeland security included, overseas military operations, intelligence activities, etc.) that easily absorbs \$3 trillion of that GDP each year. A bargain, really.

[American's are ruled by a collective of Vilos Cohagen's](#) from the movie Total Recall (original). Upon being informed that the oxygen cutoff he approved to punish mutant workers will cause them all to die, Cohagen responds, "Fuck 'em." Just so.

So where do the grand brains that rule begin to implement re-engineer a society to accept administered, deterministic freedom and life (see Herbert Marcuse and One Dimensional Man)? America's public education system, of course. K-16 public education is being ripped apart and privatized by hedge fund managers, ongoing economic recession, charter school supporters, income segregation and austerity. In fact, income disparity is linked to education disparity.

Bill Gates: A Law unto Himself

The dismantling the public education system in the USA will be the ultimate merger/takeover by the wealthy and powerful with all the standard trademarks of a Wall Street, hostile takeover: layoffs, pension raids, wage and benefits cuts, disdain for the political/legal process, litigation, etc.

Consider how the Common Core Standards, the hair brained scheme of David Coleman, now head of the College Board (SAT testing), and how they came to infiltrate the public and private K-12 education systems of the US. The national effort to drive those standards into the US education system was bankrolled by The Gates' Foundation with some shifty tactics of the Obama Administration.

According to the [Washington Post](#): "...the Common Core was instituted in many states without a single vote taken by an elected lawmaker...The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation didn't just bankroll the development of what became known as the Common Core State Standards. With more than \$200 million, the foundation also built political support across the country, persuading state governments to make systemic and costly changes."

Teachers, parents, students and local school boards were largely bypassed in the Common Core matter. Why common core? Well, in part because businesses want workers with specific noncritical thinking skills. The Common Core, along with P-20 and into workforce performance tracking and database development—also funded by Gates—will allow government and business to track prospects early on and mold them to predetermined employment slots which, in the future, will be scarcer still. America's political, military and economic leaders know well that job openings are dwindling across the USA and much of the world. The demand for jobs is far greater than government and business can supply. It's only going to get worse.

No More Jobs

Indeed, government and business recognizes that expectations for gainful employment and health benefits by the general population, particularly young students and idealistic parents, must be dampened as swiftly as possible to prepare for the dystopian, deterministic republic. Teaching conformity and non-critical thinking—and surveilling, tracking and recording student performance and acceptance of one's administered role—will be vital to maintaining a society of scarcity. Already, college degrees are declining in value even as they become more expensive for most Americans to get.

According to Reich: "...the demand for well educated workers in the USA seems to have peaked around 2000 and then fallen even as the supply of well educated workers has continued to grow...since 2000 the vast majority of college graduates have experienced little or no gain at all...The achievement gap

between poor kids and wealthy kids isn't mainly about race. In fact the racial achievement gap has been narrowing. It is a reflection of the nation's widening gap between poor and wealthy families, of how schools in poor and rich communities are financed, and the nations increasing residential segregation by income...This matters because a large portion of the money to support public schools comes from local property taxes. The federal government provides only about 10 percent of all funding whereas the states contribute 45 percent."

[Ted Trainer](#) offers a reminder of what the real purpose of education is: "Clearly schools are not there to educate, or we'd check whether that is what they do. They are there to reproduce consumer-capitalist society. That's what everyone wants them to do, and they do it well. That is why schools cannot be fixed. They cannot be reformed to not be riddled with authoritarian relations, pettifogging rules, learning masses of irrelevant and boring stuff, timetables, exams, credentials, failure and human rights abuse. If these features were eliminated then schools would not reproduce consumer-capitalist society."

John Stanton can be reached at captainkong22@gmail.com