

Neoliberal American Capitalism Rocks On!

But Does Anyone Hear Pope Francis?

by John Stanton

Though not explicitly stated, America's most powerful instrument of national power is Capitalism. The pistons that power Neoliberal American Capitalism are: Diplomacy, Information, Military, Economic, Financial, Law Enforcement, Intelligence and Human Capital/People. The clearest exposition of the instruments of national power on record can be found in the US Army's 2008 Special Operations Forces Unconventional [Warfare Manual](#).

No assessment of American political, economic, international, cultural or military strategy/action can be stamped "legitimate" without reference to and understanding of these Olympian tools of power that America's leaders have at their disposal. Combined they are the elements that form the spear and its tip that is Neoliberal American Capitalism.

Iran's recent agreement with the Capitalized world would not have been possible without US leadership: That unseen collective of America's elite (representing all the interests of the instruments of national power) that seems to have finally understood how to calibrate America's instruments of national power to secure the nation's own interests and not those of Saudi Arabia and Israel.

More importantly, the Iran and Cuba deals represent only a small chunk of viral code in the larger American software program that seeks to undermine Russia's regional power and China's global designs. Neoliberal American Capitalism's addiction for markets and profit, or simply the sport of destabilizing countries, needs a constant fix. Drama aside, the BRICS, and their bank pose an economic and financial threat to American national power.

With Iran (and Cuba) now willingly, and with a sense of urgency, opening their economies and cultures to Neoliberal American Capitalism, President Obama has, at last, a worthy legacy which consigns two of the remnants of American Cold War Capitalism to the grave and alters the geopolitical landscape in America's favor.

How can one not applaud and give credit to Obama and his Secretary of State John Kerry?

And Obama has been gracious in his diplomatic victory. Russia's role in facilitating the successful Iran agreement was acknowledged as critical despite the Pentagon's saber rattling (score one for the civil in civil-military relations). According to NBC News, "President Barack Obama telephoned Russian President Vladimir Putin ...to thank him for his part [in the recent nuclear deal with Iran](#), the White House said. The President thanked President Putin for Russia's important role in achieving this milestone, the culmination of nearly 20 months of intense negotiations, the White House said in a statement. It added that Obama and Putin agreed to remain in close touch as the Iran deal is implemented and would work together to reduce tensions in the Middle East, particularly in Syria. Russia was one of the six major powers that negotiated the deal reached with Iran on Tuesday in Vienna. The others were the United States, Germany, the European Union, China, Britain and France."

Powerful forces in the USA/Israel and Iran would have gleefully sent generations of American and Iranian youth to their deaths had President Obama not "gone to the hoop" for an Iran deal. So now

it's time for the knuckle-draggers in Iran, Israel and the USA to cause general nausea by appearing in print and electronic media drunk on the noxious brew that leads them to oppose Iran deal. They will be joined by conspiracy mongers at the ready to yell "False Flag Operation!" "The circus is in town folks! In this ring the presidential contenders. Over in that ring the knuckle-heads and the conspiracy loons." The mainstream media will keep the circus alive until having run out of angles, it is forced to read sentences backwards.

Guns and Roses

So it has come to pass that Capitalism—the freedom to buy and sell goods, services, souls and the environment—was essentially the foundation upon which was built entryways for Iran and Cuba to become full members of globalized, networked world created largely by the United States after World War II.

What further can be written by the world's social activists about the [ruthlessness](#) of the monster that is Capitalism? Certainly it must always be challenged and critiqued. And no one worth any intellectual salt doesn't dream of developing an alternative that provides real life-security for all. But the world has to wonder if the human species is capable of creating an economic doctrine, a mystical religion, a science, or a secular philosophy that is not based on Capitalist motives and practice? Is Capitalism—whether American, Chinese, Russian, Brazilian, Turkish, et al, the only viable template for human existence? This is not to praise or bury Capitalism, or proclaim any historical end, but to coldly recognize that at the moment human interests seem best and precariously served by the constant near disasters that Capitalism engenders. And the odd fact is this: No one located at the high, medium or low points of society really knows what's going on. The human species is a Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde construct which appears to be why Capitalism seems the right fit for whatever personality is in charge.

Perhaps Capitalism is "all we've got." It seems to have not reached its zenith particularly with the USA firmly at the helm of the good ship Capital and regaining speed. And what American—even the most vociferous anti-Capitalist really wants to see her country's instruments of national power eroded? No American honestly seeks second place just as no Russian, Chinese or Vietnamese chooses, when cornered, to dismiss his own nation's national interests. Pride and Capitalism are borne of the same substance.

As the kick-ass rock group Guns and Roses once sang, "Where do we go now?"

Scarface Returns to Cuba

The normalization of relations with Cuba was really a classic no-brainer. The US and Cuba have a long history. [Thomas Jefferson](#), commenting in 1820, thought that the absorption of Cuba by the USA would be a "most interesting" addition.

Losing market share and political influence to the emergent BRICS is no laughing matter. With few markets left on the planet to target and exploit, every billion US dollars count. So Cuba's lousy economic performance can be ignored, and is. According to Reuters, China and Cuba's trade accounted for \$1.4 billion in 2014. Russia TV reports that Russia's Rosneft energy concern is working with a Cuban oil company to seek out what is believed to be 20 billion barrels of oil off Cuba's coast. In 2013 Brazil and Cuba's trade was estimated at \$625 million and, more significantly, Brazil is funding and constructing a

deep water port at Mariel, Cuba which will be the key port of import/export of goods—and tourists—from Capitalists the world over, according to the Los Angeles Times.

Established in 1994 the US-Cuba Trade and Economic Council described the Cuban market this way: “The “...the Republic of Cuba, 93 miles south of the United States, a nation of *11 million consumers, which would rank it the 7th largest state if the country were a part of the United States...*” That’s big money if one can get in on it quick.

Heed the Pope's Warning

Amidst the wonders and miracles of Neoliberal American Capitalism that proponents never tire of proclaiming, there is the disease of constant crisis that plagues the market. Capitalists, of course, know that people and the ecological system (the planet) are the source of this disease. The brightest Capitalist would sooner cull the population through war and austerity rather than plant capital back into enterprises that create life-security, particularly for the young of this world.

There is only one global leader on this planet who knows this reality and actually has the guts to say it out loud in speeches in front of vast crowds and in quieter places like the [Vatican website](#).

That guy is Pope Francis, the famed Jesuit and former bouncer, who serves as the world's "warning label" for the dangerous medicine that is Capitalism. He is encouraging young people the world over to "change the system" not unlike Malcolm X did in a speech at the [Oxford Union in 1964](#).

We ignore Pope Francis at our own peril. It is worth reading, again, some excerpts from the pontiff's concerns about the planet. The Pope's thoughts match up nicely with those in the [Pale Blue Dot](#) by Carl Sagan.

"Nowadays, for example, we are conscious of the disproportionate and unruly growth of many cities, which have become unhealthy to live in, not only because of pollution caused by toxic emissions but also as a result of urban chaos, poor transportation, and visual pollution and noise. Many cities are huge, inefficient structures, excessively wasteful of energy and water. Neighborhoods, even those recently built, are congested, chaotic and lacking in sufficient green space. We were not meant to be inundated by cement, asphalt, glass and metal, and deprived of physical contact with nature. In some places, rural and urban alike, the privatization of certain spaces has restricted people's access to places of particular beauty. In others, “ecological” neighborhoods have been created which are closed to outsiders in order to ensure an artificial tranquility. Frequently, we find beautiful and carefully manicured green spaces in so-called “safer” areas of cities, but not in the more hidden areas where the disposable of society live.

The social dimensions of global change include the effects of technological innovations on employment, social exclusion, an inequitable distribution and consumption of energy and other services, social breakdown, increased violence and a rise in new forms of social aggression, drug trafficking, growing drug use by young people, and the loss of identity. These are signs that the growth of the past two centuries has not always led to an integral development and an improvement in the quality of life. Some of these signs are also symptomatic of real social decline, the silent rupture of the bonds of integration and social cohesion. Furthermore, when media and the digital world become omnipresent, their influence can stop people from learning how to live wisely, to think deeply and to love generously. In this context, the great sages of the past run the risk of going unheard amid the noise and distractions of an information overload. Efforts need to be made to help these media become sources of new cultural

progress for humanity and not a threat to our deepest riches. True wisdom, as the fruit of self-examination, dialogue and generous encounter between persons, is not acquired by a mere accumulation of data which eventually leads to overload and confusion, a sort of mental pollution. Real relationships with others, with all the challenges they entail, now tend to be replaced by a type of internet communication which enables us to choose or eliminate relationships at whim, thus giving rise to a new type of contrived emotion which has more to do with devices and displays than with other people and with nature. Today's media do enable us to communicate and to share our knowledge and affections. Yet at times they also shield us from direct contact with the pain, the fears and the joys of others and the complexity of their personal experiences. For this reason, we should be concerned that, alongside the exciting possibilities offered by these media, a deep and melancholic dissatisfaction with interpersonal relations, or a harmful sense of isolation, can also arise."

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