

Is America Fascist? Does It Matter?

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The Issue

I have been reading more and more, on the Internet and in books, the argument that the United States has become a fascist state. This article considers that thesis from the

viewpoint of *The Omega Project* (i.e., establishing a long-term-survivable planetary management system on Earth).

What is a fascist state? What is fascism? When I was a boy, I heard these terms a lot. The phrase “fascist dictatorship” was often used to refer to Hitler’s Germany and Mussolini’s Italy. But I never was told what the term really meant. The term has also been applied to Franco’s Spain, Salazar’s Portugal, Pinochet’s Chile, Papadopoulos’ Greece, Suharto’s Indonesia, and many other countries. But these are examples, not definitions.

At some point, I am sure that I looked up the definition, and my high-school history books no doubt included one, but I can still recall that the definition was not very satisfying, and I never really felt very certain about exactly what constituted a fascist state and what did not.

With the fall of “fascist” states in the last century, the term was mainly used in an historical context. Until recently. All of a sudden, there seems to be a proliferation of articles decrying America as a “fascist state.” But America has not really changed very much in recent years in its fundamental philosophy – it is a liberal democracy that embodies a capitalist, mildly regulated free-market economy. That has not changed. About the only major event that occurred recently was the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. Subsequent to that, there has been a little tightening of security restrictions, but overall, very little has been done – the US still follows a policy of mass immigration and open borders. The economy has soured somewhat, but life for most Americans is still at a high material standard. A few months ago, the US invaded Iraq, but it did this subsequent to a UN resolution approving the action. So what has changed? How has America crossed

over the fine or fuzzy line that separates a fascist state from a nonfascist state? Was it a single action, or the sum total of a lot of little actions? Was it the fall of the Soviet Union, so that the actions of the world's sole remaining superpower, with little to oppose or moderate them, are automatically classified as fascist? Or is America really changing in its fundamental character?

Some Background

Before going any further, let me present some material from some recent Internet discussions about the US and fascism. First, some material from Thom Hartmann's article, "Dismantling Democracy", posted at website <http://www.commondreams.org/views02/0922-06.htm> . Hartmann writes: "Back in 1983, before its publisher was acquired by a multinational corporation, the *American Heritage Dictionary* left us this definition of the form of government the democracies of Spain, Italy, and Germany had morphed into during the 1930s: "fas-cism (fâsh'iz'em) n. A system of government that exercises a dictatorship of the extreme right, typically through the merging of state and business leadership, together with belligerent nationalism. [Ital. fascio, group.]"

The key is the merging of state and business leadership.

When the United States was first declared independent in 1776, its Founders knew humans had previously faced tyranny in the form of despotic kings and inquisitional churches. The Bill of Rights firmly declared that no church could ever again control a democratic government. And the Declaration of Independence made it clear right from the beginning that when citizens are burdened by "a design to

reduce them under absolute Despotism,” that “it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government....”

Thus, the Founders and the Framers disposed of despotism by church or state, guaranteeing the absolute and inviolable rights of a nation’s citizens to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

But there was a third entity that Thomas Jefferson and others worried may also one day rise to seize control of the government and enslave the people. James Madison wrote, “There is an evil which ought to be guarded against in the indefinite accumulation of property from the capacity of holding it in perpetuity by ... corporations. The power of all corporations ought to be limited in this respect. The growing wealth acquired by them never fails to be a source of abuses.” Jefferson proposed an additional amendment to the Bill of Rights to restrain corporations, calling for a Constitutional Amendment to “ban monopolies in commerce,” although it failed under the Federalist opposition of the Hamilton/Adams faction.

A few decades later, President Martin Van Buren said, “I am more than ever convinced of the dangers to which the free and unbiased exercise of political opinion - the only sure foundation and safeguard of republican government - would be exposed by any further increase of the already overgrown influence of corporate authorities.” In the years since, other presidents - from Jackson to Eisenhower - have warned about the dangers to the nation if corporations were ever to take over the government.

But, claiming that the Supreme Court ruled in 1886 that corporations are the same as natural persons and thus have rights under the 14th Amendment and the Bill of Rights (the Court ruled no such thing, but the myth persists, even in law

schools), corporations have exercised human rights of free speech, privacy, and freedom from discrimination. They've used these human rights to seize control of the airwaves, threaten and bully politicians into promoting their agendas, hide corporate crimes, and prevent local communities from "discriminating" against transnational corporations over local companies while wiping out their competitors.

The takeover is nearly complete, and a world war will not only vastly enrich the transnationals who have perpetrated this coup, but could also mean the end of the first experiment with republican democracy in almost three thousand years.

It's like the magic trick in *The Wizard of Oz*, but this in a version written by Franz Kafka. The war hides the failures and crimes of the leaders and their friends. But behind the leaders and their friends are the real "men behind the screen." And they're not men at all - they're non-living, non-breathing legal fictions which have claimed the rights of humans to seize control of democracies from one side of the Atlantic to the other.

It's time that we, the people, recognize the damage this new corporate plutocracy has already inflicted on our lives, our biosphere, and our government. And, like the ten communities in Pennsylvania who have now passed ordinances denying corporate personhood, begin to take back our democracy before it's lost forever in an international conflagration. [End of Hartmann quote.]

Another article I recently read was Laurence W. Britt's article "Fascism Anyone?" posted at http://www.secularhumanism.org/library/fi/britt_23_2.htm . Britt writes: "Fascism's principles are wafting in the air today, surreptitiously masquerading as something else,

challenging everything we stand for. The cliché that people and nations learn from history is not only overused, but also overestimated; often we fail to learn from history, or draw the wrong conclusions. Sadly, historical amnesia is the norm.

We are two-and-a-half generations removed from the horrors of Nazi Germany, although constant reminders jog the consciousness. German and Italian fascism form the historical models that define this twisted political worldview. Although they no longer exist, this worldview and the characteristics of these models have been imitated by protofascist regimes at various times in the twentieth century. Both the original German and Italian models and the later protofascist regimes show remarkably similar characteristics. Although many scholars question any direct connection among these regimes, few can dispute their visual similarities.

Beyond the visual, even a cursory study of these fascist and protofascist regimes reveals the absolutely striking convergence of their *modus operandi*. This, of course, is not a revelation to the informed political observer, but it is sometimes useful in the interests of perspective to restate obvious facts and in so doing shed needed light on current circumstances.

For the purpose of this perspective, I will consider the following regimes: Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Franco's Spain, Salazar's Portugal, Papadopoulos's Greece, Pinochet's Chile, and Suharto's Indonesia. To be sure, they constitute a mixed bag of national identities, cultures, developmental levels, and history. But they all followed the fascist or protofascist model in obtaining, expanding, and maintaining power. Further, all these regimes have been

overthrown, so a more or less complete picture of their basic characteristics and abuses is possible.

Analysis of these seven regimes reveals fourteen common threads that link them in recognizable patterns of national behavior and abuse of power. These basic characteristics are more prevalent and intense in some regimes than in others, but they all share at least some level of similarity. [I will just list the fourteen items here – see Britt’s full article for explanations, plus references.]

1. Powerful and continuing expressions of nationalism
2. Disdain for the importance of human rights
3. Identification of enemies / scapegoats as a unifying cause
4. The supremacy of the military / avid militarism
5. Rampant sexism
6. A controlled mass media
7. Obsession with national security
8. Religion and ruling élite tied together
9. Power of corporations protected
10. Power of labor suppressed or eliminated
11. Disdain and suppression of intellectuals and the arts
12. Obsession with crime and punishment
13. Rampant cronyism and corruption
14. Fraudulent elections

Britt closes with a quote from Huey Long: “When fascism comes to America, it will be wrapped in the American flag.” [End of Britt’s material.]

[Paragraph added 11 May 2008.] In reviewing Britt’s list of attributes of a fascist state, it is interesting to see that the US scores “high” in a number of them. On item 3 (Identification of enemies / scapegoats as a unifying cause) the shift of

focus from communism to the never-ending “war on terror” stands out. On item 4 (The supremacy of the military / avid militarism), the tremendous investment of energy and resources in the military is without parallel in the world. Item 5 (Obsession with national security) is prominent on a continuing basis, with daily announcements of the number of US soldiers killed in Iraq and the continuous maintenance of “yellow” (elevated) status for the nation and “orange” (high) status for all domestic and international flights, under the Department of Homeland Security’s Security Advisory System. With respect to item 8 (Religion and ruling elite tied together), the strenuous efforts of organized religions to support the US government in its program to encourage and support illegal immigration are notable. Item 9 (Power of corporations protected) stands out as a hallmark of the country’s government, across the legislative, executive and judicial departments. On item 10 (Power of labor suppressed or eliminated), the government’s waging of a war against the middle class continues unabated, with several decades of mass immigration, massive international free trade and open borders. All of the benefits of increased productivity have gone to the wealthy, and the middle class now work twice as hard as in the past (with two family workers now in the competitive labor force, compared to one fifty years ago). Item 12 (Obsession with crime and punishment) stands out egregiously, now that the US imprisons one percent of its adult population and one in seven black males. (The US has more prisoners than any other country in the world, and has the highest rate of incarceration in the world.) The “war on drugs” has gone far to make criminals out of many people (recreational drug users) and to spawn much crime (to purchase drugs at the grossly inflated prices resulting from their criminalization). Item 13 (Rampant cronyism and corruption) is exemplified by the symbiosis of the US government with the powerful

corporate lobby system. The fact that the Clintons could amass 109 million dollars in the period 2000-2006, after leaving the White House with negative assets, stands in tribute to this system. The classic example of item 14 (Fraudulent elections) is the “stealing” of the 2000 presidential election from Al Gore by voting-machine “problems” in Florida, and the continued efforts of the government to promote the use of electronic voting machines.

In his book, *The Party's Over*, Richard Heinberg writes: “Giant corporations are engines of growth and have become primary power wielders in modern industrial societies. One way to rein them in would be to challenge important legal privileges they have acquired through dubious means. The Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution was adopted soon after the Civil War to grant freed slaves the rights of persons; but by the last decades of the 19th century, judges and corporate lawyers had twisted the Amendment’s interpretation to regard corporations as persons, thus granting them the same rights as flesh-and-blood human beings. Since then, the Fourteenth Amendment has been invoked to protect corporations’ rights roughly 100 times more frequently than African Americans’ rights.

“The legal fiction of corporate personhood gives corporations the right of free speech, under the First Amendment to the US Constitution. In recent years, when communities or states have sought to restrict corporations’ campaign donations to politicians, the courts have overruled such restrictions as a violation of corporate free-speech rights as persons. Corporations also are allowed constitutional protection against illegal search and seizure so that decisions made in corporate boardrooms are protected from public scrutiny. However, corporate “persons” do not have

the same limitations and liabilities as flesh-and-blood persons. A human person in California who commits three felonies will be jailed for 25 years to life under the state's "three-strikes" law; but a California-chartered corporate "person" that racks up dozens of felony convictions for breaking environmental or other laws receives only a fine, which it can write off as a cost of doing business. Personhood almost always serves the interests of the largest and wealthiest corporations while small, local businesses that also have corporate legal status are systematically disadvantaged."

The preceding are but a few of the growing number of references to the US as a fascist state.

[Paragraph added 11 May 2008.] While passing through the Chicago airport last week (27 April 2008), I picked up an interesting book on fascism in America. It is Jonah Goldberg's *Liberal Fascism* (2007). Goldberg makes the point very convincingly that fascism is primarily a phenomenon of the left (the party of change) rather than of the right (the party of the status quo). Goldman discusses at length the fact that there is no fixed definition of fascism, and he presents his own: "Fascism is a religion of the state. It assumes the organic unity of the body politic and longs for a national leader attuned to the will of the people. It is totalitarian in that it views everything as political and holds that any action by the state is justified to achieve the common good. It takes responsibility for all aspects of life, including our health and well-being, and seeks to impose uniformity of thought and action, whether by force or through regulation and social pressure. Everything, including the economy and religion, must be aligned with its objectives. Any rival identity is part of the 'problem' and therefore defined as the enemy. I will argue that contemporary

American liberalism embodies all of these aspects of fascism.”

[Paragraph added 11 May 2008.] Further, Goldberg writes, “Robert F. Kennedy Jr. recycles this theme [that big business is the power behind fascism] when he writes, ‘The rise of fascism across Europe in the 1930s offers many lessons on how corporate power can undermine a democracy. Mussolini complained that ‘fascism should really be called corporatism.’”

[Paragraph added 11 May 2008.] Goldberg makes convincing arguments that the US was a fascist state under the administration of President Woodrow Wilson, and that the liberals of today promote fascism. He does not come right out and declare that the US is a fascist state today. For all intents and purposes, it is. The only real argument against this point of view is that the US of today is no longer a sovereign state. It is one of many states under the control of global Corporatism. It is simply a department or branch of that global business. The US government has no power, and the US people have no power. The real power is in the hands of big business. Ordinarily, the term “fascism” applies to sovereign states, not to corporations or branches of corporations, such as the US is today. The term *corporatism* appears to best describe the political state of the world today.

So, Is America a Fascist State?

So, what’s going on? Has America all of a sudden, or even gradually, become a fascist state? If you consider the definition and discussion given above, it is clear that fascism, like democracy, socialism, communism, and many other

forms of government, can vary considerably in its implementation. Whether a state is fascist or not depends, to a considerable extent, on one's opinion about the degree or extent to which the state displays or embodies the various characteristics cited in the definition. It would appear to be quite consistent with the definition to refer to America as a fascist democracy – it is nationalistic and patriotic; it does embrace business (economic development, industrial activity) as the lynchpin of its society; and it supports a very powerful military-industrial complex, which it is not reluctant to use from time to time, especially to secure unfettered access to the oil on which its industrial system so crucially depends. Of course, one could argue that it is not at all in the class of the dictatorships of Mussolini and Hitler, and that this term is too strong. One could argue that no state extant today is a fascist state, in the same league as Hitler's Germany or Mussolini's Italy. One could argue either way that America is a fascist state, or that it is not. Of course, one might keep in mind the old saying, "If it walks like a duck, and it talks like a duck, it's probably a duck!"

But does it matter? With respect to solving the world's environmental crisis (destruction of the biosphere, mass species extinction, pollution of the land, oceans, and atmosphere), what difference does it make whether America is fascist or not? And here, the discussion gets interesting.

The Current World Situation

First, it is important to recognize what is going on. The world is in the end stages of the technological age. It has discovered the secrets of physical science and technology, and it has had access to massive reserves of fossil fuels to implement technology without constraint. Because of

access to large fossil fuel reserves and the technology to utilize them, human population has exploded to the point where it is destroying the very biosphere in which mankind evolved and which is necessary for its continued existence.

The most significant aspect of the current technological age is that virtually no one is willing to stop the destruction of the biosphere. All world leaders are calling for more industrial development and activity, not less. All world leaders, and almost all people, are calling for higher material standards of living, regardless of the consequences to the environment or to future generations of mankind. The human population continues to grow at an incredible rate, close to one percent per year. Commercial energy consumption continues to grow even faster, at about two percent per year. All of the world's nations have embraced industrialization, and they are all competing to produce and consume more. It is very clear that human society has no intention of "drawing the brakes" on industrial development and activity, and that the industrial age will continue at full throttle until the world runs out of petroleum and the entire global industrial system crashes catastrophically. Individuals who see that large human numbers and industrial activity are destroying the planet are utterly helpless to stop the destruction.

So what can be done to stop this, to avert the catastrophic collapse of the industrial age? The answer is simple: *Nothing*. That is, nothing can be done to stop the industrial age from continuing until global petroleum production starts to decline, in just a few years, and the system of global industrialization crashes catastrophically. The development of global industrial society is a natural part of the life cycle of a planet's development, once an aggressive, competitive, intelligent species is introduced into it. The philosophy of economics has a stranglehold on all nations and most of the

world's population. It does not matter to present human society that the biosphere is being destroyed, that millions of species are being made extinct, and that nothing will be left for all future generations of mankind. Absolutely nothing is being done to stop the process of continued economic growth and large-scale industrial activity, which is destroying the planet and the quality of life for all species for millions of years to come. In spite of the fact that the petroleum age is about half over (i.e., half of the global oil reserves have been used up, global energy utilization per capita has been declining for a couple of decades, and the global annual rate of production is about to start decreasing), modern industrial society has shown no interest or ability to avert the catastrophic collapse that is just around the corner. At the very latest, the industrial age will end by 2050, when all of the world's oil reserves are exhausted. More likely, it will end in within the present decade, as global oil production starts to decline.

With the world's present system of over 200 sovereign nations, each champing at the bit to outproduce the others, the end of the industrial age will come quickly. Despite all the warning signs, all nations and all major international or multinational organizations (the United Nations, the World Bank, nongovernmental organizations, corporations) are working to increase industrial production (and, it follows, energy production / consumption), both in absolute terms and per capita terms. Because of the facts that human population is increasing, that all nations and people want higher standards of living, and that the global rate of oil production will soon start to fall, all energy conservation efforts are a complete waste of time. *No matter how much more energy-efficient or energy-conserving industrial society becomes, the saving will be used up rapidly, as global oil production starts to decline (within this decade).*

This fact bears repeating. Because we are soon to enter the phase of the petroleum age when global oil production starts to decline, energy conservation now – no matter how extreme – will not extend the end of the petroleum age even by a single year (since whatever savings are realized while oil production is still increasing will be immediately used up when production starts to decline, because demand will increasingly exceed supply). Because the human population is continuing to grow (projected to reach nine billion by 2050, in the absence of catastrophic collapse), because the demand for oil increases every year, and because global production will soon fall to levels far below global demand, the end of the petroleum age will occur at about the same time, *even if very significant new oil deposits are discovered*. The industrial age will soon be over, either as soon as global oil production peaks (by 2010), or by the time it ends (by 2050).

The Catastrophic Collapse of Industrial Society Is Inevitable – and Desirable

Nothing can be done to stop the continuation of the industrial age until it collapses catastrophically. That is the natural fate of societies, civilizations, and dynamic systems. It is the fate of all biological systems that gain access to a windfall source of new energy: population proliferation, overshoot, and collapse (dieoff). But does this mean that nothing can be done at all – that we should just continue the industrial age as in the past. No, not at all. There is an incredible amount that can be done, and should be done, and *must* be done. What must be done is to take actions so that, when the industrial age collapses, the damage to the biosphere will have been minimized, and a new system of planetary

management is set up to preserve and maintain what is left – a long-term-sustainable system of planetary management that minimizes the probability of extinction for mankind and for the other species of the biosphere. That is the objective of *The Omega Project*.

What can be done is to take whatever measures possible to preserve genetic material, so that as much as possible of the biodiversity that is destroyed by the industrial age can be replenished. Since much of the species loss from the industrial age is caused by habitat destruction, it is imperative that as much natural-growth forest be preserved as possible. And, most importantly, it is important to disseminate information about the reasons for the collapse of the industrial age and the incredible environmental damage that it caused, so that no large-scale industry is ever allowed again on the planet. All of these things are possible, and all of them can make a tremendous difference.

It is very important for people to understand that it is not possible to operate a planet on a long-term-sustainable basis with multiple sovereign nations, all committed to industrial development and activity. It is very important for people to realize that the planet was able to support at most a few tens of millions of people for millions of years, with virtually no damage to the biosphere, and that that level of human population is all that can exist, if a healthy, diverse biosphere is to be preserved and maintained. It is very important for people to know that in a minimal-regret population of ten million people, all people will be free from poverty and war, free to take full advantage of an ecologically rich planet, and free to develop physically and spiritually.

So, in the last days of the industrial age, there are things to do that can make a tremendous difference in the quality of life for mankind and all other species, for millions of years to come. There is nothing that you can do to stop the collapse of the industrial age. And there is no reason why anyone who cares about nature and the quality of life for mankind would wish to do so. The sooner it collapses, the more of the biosphere that will be saved. Each year that the industrial age continues means another 30,000 species are made extinct, and gone forever from our biosphere. The most important thing that you can do for the future of the planet and mankind is to spread the word that as soon as the industrial world collapses, it is very important for all of the survivors to work together to set up a new world government based on a single planetary management organization and a minimal-regret population of ten million people. And all that is required to accomplish this is talk -- *Logos*.

But I have digressed. The issue posed by this article is whether America is a fascist state, and whether it matters. It can be argued that America is fascist, and it can be argued otherwise. What is important, to avoid the complete destruction of the biosphere, is that the industrial age end as soon and as completely as possible. Contemporary wisdom is that industrial civilization will collapse as soon as the rate of global oil production starts to fall – this is expected to occur in the present decade, 2001-2010. Since modern society is addicted to oil, and since the human population continues to soar, resource wars will break out soon. What is important is that what occurs is not an endless series of minor wars, in which the industrial age continues until the last possible date (when global oil exhausts, about 2050), destroying 30,000 more species every year. What is important is that the industrial age end quickly and definitely.

The Importance of Being Fascist

The real issue of importance is not whether America is fascist, but whether its continued role – characterized as fascist or otherwise – promotes a rapid end to the industrial age, with a chance of saving the biosphere, or instead promotes a slow decline in which mass species extinction and climate change wreak much further environmental devastation and destroy the quality of life on Earth for all time. But this will not happen. The global system of free trade and multiple sovereign nations ensures that this will not happen. Under this system of planetary management (perhaps *non-management* is a better term), it is inevitable that the US, Russia, China, India and Brazil and many other countries will continue to industrialize. They all want a better standard of living for their citizens, and they are all concerned for their national security. As a result, the nuclear arms race will continue, with a vengeance. The US and Russia will not relinquish their nuclear arms. China and India will continue to increase the size of their nuclear arsenals. Other smaller countries (e.g., Israel, Pakistan, North Korea, Iran, the UK, France) will continue to develop theirs. The resource wars will begin as soon as global world oil production starts to fall, in a few years. Global nuclear war is just around the corner.

If the US and other countries were to end their commitment to maximum-rate industrialization, to free trade, and to globalisation, the industrial age could conceivably limp along for centuries (there is sufficient coal to last another couple of centuries), albeit not at such a high level as during the heyday of the petroleum age (before the global peak in production). And that would seal the doom of the planet's biosphere. Now that the philosophy of economics has been embraced worldwide – that economic development is good,

that a high material standard of living is good, that only economic development can raise people from poverty, that the damage to the environment is an “externality” that doesn’t matter, that what happens to future generations is irrelevant (i.e., has a “discounted present value” of almost zero) – the industrial age has a death-grip on the planet. This grip is incredibly strong because not only do the wealthy (individuals, corporations, nations, international organizations) wish to continue the system, but the ordinary citizens of the world (almost) all have been convinced that the only way to a life free of poverty is through more industrialization – even though it is industrialization that has created the billions of desperately poor people presently on the planet!

But with an aggressive America – a fascist America, if you will – other countries are strongly motivated to increase their level of industrialization and to increase the sizes of their nuclear stockpiles. In today’s world society of sovereign, industrialized nations, a strong, aggressive America is a catalyst to motivate other nations to continue industrial development and activity. A fascist America will compel other nations to arm themselves. A world filled with healthy, active industrial nations will self-destruct much more quickly and more thoroughly than a world of sickly nations, or a world of peaceful industrial nations, or a world with a single superpower committed to global industrialization. Peace has caused far more environmental destruction than war ever did. Continued peace in an industrial world will accomplish the complete destruction of the biosphere. What the world needs is a fast end-game to the industrial age, not an industrial age that goes on for a long time before it eventually and inevitably dies.

The religion of economics has sown the seeds of its own destruction. It espouses the very things – democracy, free trade, national sovereignty, economic efficiency, increased production, globalization, disregard for nature – that will cause it to self-destruct.

What Can You Do?

So what can you do? What should you do? What you should do, if you care about nature, if you care about the quality of life for all future generations, is to work to promote the acceptance of a single planetary management organization of a minimal-regret population of ten million people, after the industrial world collapses. Invest your time and resources, to the extent that you can, in doing whatever you can to promote the preservation of species – seed banks distributed around the world, national parks, environmental movements, ecotourism – anything that will result in more species being alive when the industrial world collapses.

Do not waste time on energy conservation. Do not waste time trying to stop globalisation, free trade, immigration, or anything else that hinders economic efficiency and industrial development, for that system will continue, all-powerful – until it collapses. Those of you who know my views on immigration may not believe that I am saying this, but even massive immigration does not matter. America's mass immigration policy (up to three million immigrants a year) is obscenely wasteful of energy – the millions of immigrants coming to the US consume from ten to 100 times as much energy as they did in their former countries. The greater the immigration to the US and other industrialized nations,

however, the sooner the world will run out of petroleum, and the sooner the industrial age will end.

Do not engage in terrorism. Work hard in the industrial system – a healthy, fast-growing industrial society will expand faster and run out of fuel faster, and self-destruct faster, than a sickly or damaged one. A world filled with many independent industrial nations will self-destruct more quickly and much more thoroughly than one comprised of a single or a small number of nations, particularly if banded together in a synarchic (“joint rule”) union. Work hard for economic / industrial development of all nations – the sooner the world’s petroleum production peaks, the sooner the industrial age will end. Work hard and play hard – enjoy the benefits of the industrial age to the fullest. But all the while, and above all, work hard to spread the word about the need for establishing a minimal-regret population after the industrial world collapses.

What should you do in your personal life? Take full advantage of the tremendous opportunities for creative expression in this age. Get as much education as you can. Develop yourself as a human being – physically, mentally, and spiritually – to the max. Enjoy your free time. Enjoy your work. Express yourself. Fall in love. Enjoy your family and friends. Have more children! Teach the ignorant; help the poor and the sick. And above all, use energy! Use it wisely, to help preserve the diversity of the planet’s biosphere and help world transit to a long-term-sustainable system of planetary management. But, in any event, use it! See the pyramids of Egypt and Mexico, and the ruins of Macchu Picchu. Build a house. Buy a car. Enjoy a vacation on the French Riviera, or in South America. Send your children on “graduation trip” to Washington, Paris, London, Madrid, and Rome. And know, with certainty, that the faster

the world consumes its remaining oil, the sooner and more complete will be the end of the industrial age.

While the industrial age lasts, achieve all that you can, with the incredible freedom and energy of this physical existence that God has bestowed upon you at this time. If you are an American, work hard to make America the strongest nation in the world. If you are a Russia, work hard to make Russia the strongest nation in the world. If you are a Chinese, work hard to make China the strongest nation in the world. Do not feel guilty about enjoying the fruits of the industrial age – the petroleum age will end by 2050 no matter what you or anyone else does, and it will take very little of its energy to prepare for the implementation of a long-term-sustainable system of planetary management after the collapse of industrial society.

Today's industrial age is a remarkable – and incredibly short – one that practically no one else who ever lived or ever will live on Earth has the opportunity to experience. But never forget your responsibility and your obligation and your sacred duty to the future. You could not have prevented the industrial age from occurring, and you cannot prevent it from running its course. But you can help decide what kind of world will exist, for all time, after it is over. That is the tremendous and wonderful opportunity that the current world crisis has given to you, and to the others of the present generation who are privileged to live in this time of incredible danger and opportunity.

Enjoy the rewards of the industrial age. It is one of the inevitable, God-given ages of life on planet Earth. It is a wonderful age, full of fascinating creations and opportunities and experiences. Today's inhabitants of the industrial world live lives that are more luxurious than those of the kings of

all previous ages. The opportunities to conquer, to develop, to create, to explore, to build, to acquire knowledge, to invent, to discover, to help, and to make a difference are better and more exciting than in any previous time, and, with massive energy resources and individual freedom, they are available to the ordinary individual.

The challenge of saving the world from total destruction is the most exciting and important challenge of all time. This is an amazing time on planet Earth. It just can't last for very long. You have tremendous leverage in your present life on Earth. You can make an incredible difference, for all time. Very few human beings ever had this opportunity before, and soon, none will. How you spend your time while this age lasts will make a tremendous difference for all future generations who live on Earth.

The fact that the industrial age, the age of economics, cannot last very long has been recognized by many people for a long time. One of the most renowned economists of all time, the mathematician John Maynard Keynes, recognized this. He observed (in his 1930 essay, "Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren") the fatal limitations of economics as a long-term basis for human society:

"Some day we may return to some of the most sure and certain principles of religion and traditional virtue – that avarice is a vice, that the extraction of usury is a misdemeanor, and the love of money is detestable. But beware! The time for all this is not yet. For at least another hundred years we must pretend to ourselves and to every one that fair is foul and foul is fair; for foul is useful and fair is not. Avarice and usury and precaution must be our gods for a little while longer."

Many other people are very aware of the inevitable end of the industrial age. Science fiction writers have toyed with this theme over and over. Prophets and seers have seen the end of civilization since the dawn of history. Anyone who thinks seriously about the massive environmental destruction being caused by large human numbers and industrial activity will reach the conclusion that this incredibly destructive system cannot continue for very long.

Which Future Do You Choose?

In closing, I would like to speculate on the futures that are possible for Earth. Fred Hoyle did this, in his novel, *October the First Is Too Late*. In that novel, the various futures were sequential in time – but all of them had low human populations on a planet devoid of other large animals. Today, there is much discussion by quantum physicists and New Agers of parallel universes and alternative futures. Recently, I read an interesting book, *The Holographic Universe*, by Michael Talbot. In it, there is a passage where Talbot describes the descriptions of future-life progressions (the reverse of “past-life regressions”) by 2,500 people. The results are very interesting from two points of view. First, virtually all of the people see a future world with very few people in it. Second, they see four different kinds of futures – (1) a joyless and sterile “space-age” future; (2) a “New Age” future of happy people living in harmony with nature; (3) a bleak mechanical future of people living in underground cities; and (4) a post-global-disaster future of people living in urban ruins, caves, and isolated farms.

Talbot writes: “[Dr. Helen] Wambach discovered she could also *progress* people to future lives. Indeed, her subjects’ descriptions of coming centuries were so fascinating she

conducted a major future-life-progression project in France and the United States. Unfortunately, she passed away before completing the study, but psychologist Chet Snow, a former colleague of Wambach's, carried on her work and recently published the results in a book entitled *Mass Dreams of the Future*.

“When the reports of the 2,500 people who participated in the project were tallied, several interesting features emerged. First, virtually all of the respondents agreed that the population of the earth had decreased dramatically. Many did not even find themselves in physical bodies in the various future time periods specified, and those who did noted that the population was much smaller than it is today.

“In addition, the respondents divided up neatly into four categories, each relating a different future. One group described a joyless and sterile future in which most people lived in space stations, wore silvery suits, and ate synthetic food. Another, the “New Agers,” reported living happier and more natural lives in natural settings, in harmony with one another, and in dedication to learning and spiritual development. Type 3, the “hi-tech urbanites,” described a bleak mechanical future in which people lived in underground cities and cities enclosed in domes and bubbles. Type 4 described themselves as post-disaster survivors living in a world that had been ravaged by some global, possibly nuclear, disaster. People in this group lived in homes ranging from urban ruins to caves to isolated farms, wore plain handsewn clothing that was often made of fur, and obtained much of their food by hunting.

“What is the explanation? Snow turns to the holographic model for the answer, and like Loye, believes that such findings suggest that there are several potential futures, or

holoverse, forming in the gathering mists of fate. But like other past-life researchers he also believes we create our own destiny, both individually and collectively, and thus the four scenarios are really a glimpse into the various potential futures the human race is creating for itself *en masse*.”

Many quantum physicists and New Agers believe that the past and the future are not fixed, but that a spectrum of Earth paths exist – alternative futures that we can shape by our actions today. I believe that this is true. I believe that you can make a difference. I believe that you can help decide what future unfolds on Earth. The future can be as dismal or as happy and fulfilling as you wish it to be and you cause it to be. You can help make it a living hell, devoid of the magic diversity of today’s biosphere, or a wonderful Garden of Eden in which mankind can continue spiritual development living in harmony with nature. The choice is yours. Which will it be?

Afterword

From time to time, I receive e-mails asking why I am proposing the destruction of six billion people, to save the biosphere. I am not proposing any such thing. I have said this and written this before, but it evidently bears repeating. The planet’s human population has exploded to six billion people because of the windfall of fossil fuels and the development of technology to use them. Without this energy source, the planet’s recurrent solar energy budget can support at most a couple of hundred million people, long term. The human population is very large at the present time solely because of fossil fuels. As they run out, global human population will fall from six billion or more back to a couple of hundred million.

The issue is not whether this will happen. It *absolutely will* happen. The only issues that we have any control over is what the state of the rest of the biosphere will be when industrial society collapses, as the petroleum age ends, and what system of planetary management is set up after the industrial age ends. With respect to the former issue, I have written that it is better for the industrial age to end sooner rather than later, since 30,000 more species are made extinct for every year that the industrial age continues. I have also discussed the issue of an optimal timing of global war, with respect to minimizing the negative impact on the biosphere. But I am not proposing war or working toward war as a means of ending the destruction of nature by global industrialization. I am a mathematical statistician – an analyst, a strategist, a planner – not a soldier.

The industrial age will end soon because the petroleum age will end soon. This will happen independently of anything that I or anyone else does. And it will happen whether global war occurs or not. But it will probably happen with war, famine, and plague, since these are what occur when societies collapse. For the reasons I cited earlier (catastrophe theory, systems dynamics modeling, the overshoot condition of humanity, the imminent decline of global oil production – but, most of all, our destruction of the biosphere and our pollution of the land, air, and water of our planet), the collapse of the industrial world will almost surely be catastrophic. In my opinion, as I have discussed elsewhere, it will probably involve global war. But I am not proposing such a war, or trying in any way to bring it about. The industrial world will collapse of its own weight because it cannot continue without the massive input of petroleum, and that is about to decline and end.

What I *am* proposing is that, *after* the collapse of the industrial world, the survivors set up a long-term-sustainable system of planetary management, based on a synarchic (Platonic) government of a “minimal-regret” population of ten million people (a single-nation high-technology society of five million and a globally distributed low-technology population of hunter-gatherers). What I am working to accomplish is that people begin to face the reality of the impending collapse of the industrial world, and take steps to ensure that it is followed by a long-term-sustainable system of planetary management and as species-diversity-rich a biosphere as possible. I am proposing *discussion* of alternative systems of planetary management and *dissemination* of ideas, not *war*.

The sooner the industrial world collapses, the less damage it will cause to the environment and the species diversity of the biosphere – that is a fact. And global war will happen with or without me. These are things over which I have little or no control. What I can control, however, is the nature and extent of the discussion of planetary management alternatives, so that the survivors of the collapse of the industrial world will have had the benefit of much discussion of causes and alternatives, and know what to do. To a lesser degree, I may have some control over the state of the biosphere when industrial society collapses, but that is not my area of primary interest or activity – many other people are working in that area, while no one at all, it seems, is working in the area of setting up a long-term-sustainable system of planetary management for the post-industrial age.

In my writings, I have described the general characteristics of alternative long-term-sustainable systems of planetary management, but I have said very little about the detailed structure of such a system, or about the mechanics of setting

up and maintaining such a system. This is partly due to a lack of time; partly due to lack of detailed vision in this matter; partly due to lack of necessity, if most of the survivors of the collapse of the industrial world want it to happen; and partly due to the fact that this part of the process of transiting to a *New World Order* will fall to someone else (viz., the survivors of the collapse of industrial society). My role is strategic planning and knowledge dissemination, not execution of *The Plan*. What I *have* written in this regard, however, is that it would be difficult to control a planet by force, and that a much better (more efficient, more reliable) approach is to convince people of the absolute necessity of implementing a planetary management system based on a synarchic government of a minimal-regret population, after the collapse of the industrial world. Action follows belief – if most of the survivors believe that this is the best way to go, then that is what will happen, with little force or violence required. And that is why the educational goals of *The Omega Project* are so important. The long-term success of the effort will depend more on spirituality and religion and belief than on force and violence.

I have written before that I do not see that war and conflict and evil will ever be absent from this physical world. What I do believe (and have written), however, is that the *nature* of war and conflict will likely change very much in the next age (following the end of global industrialization). In my view, the industrial age will end in massive, violent, extremely destructive global war. Given the tremendous overshoot of the human population, I do not see any chance that that will not occur. After that, however, in the post-industrial age, there is a tremendous opportunity to set up a new world order based on global peace and harmony with nature. Even then, however, the battle between the forces of good and evil will continue – there is no point to physical existence

without challenge, conflict, risk and uncertainty. It is in that sense that I believe that war will never end. The battle will continue to rage between the forces of global industrialization that would destroy nature and our biosphere, and those who would seek global peace and harmony with nature. That battle – that war, if you will – will never end. With a planetary management organization such as I conceive in charge, however, there will never again be large-scale industrial war, such as the world saw in the twentieth century and such as will soon destroy the global industrial world. It will not happen because, under a planetary management system based on a synarchic government of a minimal-regret population of ten million, multiple nation-states will not exist, nor will global industrialization.

I am not saying that no force will be required. Some effort is always required to accomplish anything of value. And we live in a world in which good will always be opposed by evil. In a physical world filled with independent, sentient beings, some force will certainly be required. Monitoring will be necessary and action will be necessary. A world of peace and harmony with nature will not happen by itself, now that technology is out of Pandora's box. But the level of force required to maintain a synarchically governed minimal-regret population will be very small. The effort will be corrective in nature, not radical or revolutionary or convulsive. It will not involve large, industrial-scale war. All that is required is to prevent the rise of industrial civilization anywhere on the planet except for the single-nation high-technology city. All that is required is to destroy industrial developments as they start to occur. And this is easy to do, as long as they are not allowed to grow.

The level of force required to maintain a minimal-regret population will be very low. In fact, it will hardly be necessary at all if the religious and spiritual movements are successful in showing the importance of eschewing industrialization to the survival and health of the biosphere. It will not involve wars in which large populations are pitted against each other. It will involve simply the destruction of whatever industrial artefacts or manifestations arise, such as large buildings, bridges and dams (outside of the single-nation high-technology city-state). The destruction of towns or underground complexes would not be required, unless the situation is allowed to get “out of control.”

The situation is analogous to keeping a lawn free of dandelions or clover, or a garden free of weeds. If you weed the lawn once a week, it is an easy job, and requires little time and energy. If you ignore the lawn or garden for an extended period of time, however, the lawn will be come overrun with dandelions and clover in short order, and the garden will become filled with weeds. Yes, some force – attention and action – is required to maintain anything that is worthwhile. Our physical world will never be filled with people playing harps. The issue is what the goal is, and how best it may be achieved. While the industrial age was fascinating and helped produce an explosion in human knowledge, a continuing cycle of growth and destruction of industrial societies is no longer helpful for human beings to accomplish spiritual development, and it is not beneficial to the biodiversity of the biosphere. It was great fun while it lasted, but that age is over. The Party’s Over. Let the new Party begin.

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