

An Editorial: Update: The Russians are Coming ... Again: The Conflict of Politics, Natural Resources and the American Political and Economic System

by

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There were times in history when a democratic people did not speak up or take action when the politics of the day were severely out of step with the general populace. The Germans, Italians, and the Japanese once had an opportunity to stop the damage to their culture before it happened. They thought their leaders knew what they were saying and were caught up with what they were doing, to the shame of all parties involved.

We are living now through a similar pre-period in our history that because of the widespread news media accounts, they allow us to observe and determine what is right and what is wrong, or so it would seem. Common sense appears to have devolved into a circus of misrepresentations and outright lies and exaggerations from the current crop of recalcitrant Republications via their Truth Box otherwise known as *FoxNews*. The opposing news media are more than happy to point these failings out in detail, albeit ad nauseam.

During the past two years I have gained a new respect for the news media and have been reminded of the need for their presence in our society, even if some may degrade into propaganda vehicles promoting whomever is the president of the country. But as intelligent citizens shouldn't we be able to judge the merits of such?

Why not now? Something has changed, but maybe all those secrets are finally emerging in the far right of the Republican Party as a result of coercion from a person who has been saying out loud what they have been thinking privately for years, even in their families for generations.

These have been hiding greed (manifested in the perceived right to accumulate excessive capital) and obscuring prejudice below a thick skin of religious righteousness that perhaps has been present in their families since even before the Civil War.

If we remember our history, that was a time where Overseers ('republicans') of the day also held greed and prejudice as their righteous family banner, even to the extent of combining both by selling of human beings and at the highest price. Even the current Capitalism exhibits a form of slavery where the rich (those who own the companies (i.e., the cotton fields) pay humans to do the owners' work (i.e., to pick the cotton), but at a rate that hasn't risen much since the 1990s. And, the income difference between the 1-to-10%ers and the middle and lower income wage earners in the U.S. continues to widen.

As a geoscientist of some standing having a well-rounded college education with two degrees in the geosciences (from the Ohio State University and Rice University), and after some 52 years of professional experience traveling throughout the U.S. and around the world, I have been encouraged by those people I respected through the years to stay involved with the culture around me, and that meant staying up with the politics of the day. I have done so for more than five decades. But, the adage that independent scientists should avoid speaking out on politics in fear of damaging their reputations is both irrelevant and illogical, now that we know that a cult of politicians are corrupt and seriously flawed.

Today, I find it necessary to speak out on some of the current political issues. My far-Right friends and politicians are laying low these days for fear of losing social position, tax avoidance advantages, or other sources of income from off-shore bank accounts for one example.

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My far-Left friends want all of it, and for the most part, they, and all citizens, deserve universal health care, education, employment, and the power that eliminating the Electoral College would provide.

The point here is that there are no central positions at present holding perspectives of possible compromise by either political party. There are only a few conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans, a few of the latter are my friends. But it appears our socialist technology as involved in *Facebook*, etc. has backed us into corners a few years before the 2016 presidential elections, with some help provided by Capitalism (those who hold the wealth via Wall Street, Koch Brothers, and the other 1 to 10%ers in the U.S.), combined with serious interference with our social intercourse (*Facebook*, *Twitter*, etc) during and before the election by the Russians, etc. who used our own systems to divide us. But multiple parties other than Democrat or Republican are clearly not workable either. Thanks to 3rd-parties such as: Bernie Sanders (who might as well been leading the Independent Party because many of his supporters did not vote or voted for 3rd-party candidates), the Green Party, the Libertarian Party, and others of the past such as Ross Perot, and let's not forget, Ralph Nader. They took away those millions of popular votes that just might have changed reality by swaying the Electoral College voters away from confirming our current P. T. Barnum, and earlier pretenders that would have also changed our world today.

The EC members serve as the overseers of the so-called American Democracy but they actually represent the old American Republic, a two-tiered system of the 1 to 10%ers and the rest of us. The former EC voting group, being those with the money and influence who supersede those who have much less of both but who also cast the popular votes. This is clearly a system requiring change.

There appears to be a strong psychological aspect to all of the issues under discussion here. I won't deal in any detail with what's impacting some of our people today because I'm not qualified to do so, but I have some ideas, as do many psychologists (who have written [articles](#), [books](#) and [Google](#) is even overflowing with warnings about the issues, has an uncomfortable ring of truth revealing the Republican psyche as well). I can now identify those individuals who have been clearly affected by a particularly severe political [meme](#), and it should be clear to all. But, in a broader scale, we all know that polarization sooner or later leads to conflict, and if protracted, this can, and has, resulted in civil war or revolution, depending on what side of the Earth you live.

It appears that the issues underlying the American Civil War were never really solved, just driven underground and gentrified in the far Right who still carry a white separatist meme that has recently broken through again and which is being amplified by our current president and his 35% while continuing to divide us. Another American Civil War may have to settle these racial matters as the U.S. becomes browner by the day. The meme will have to be broken if we are to avoid Civil War II. Most spiritual leaders have been affected, as have self-serving business men and some woman. An education has even lost impact on some, but those under-educated are the most susceptible to such severe memes, as in Germany in the later 1930s. So, this is not the time to be politically correct by remaining silent, but a time to find the way to break the memes currently afflicting millions of our people and their representatives in the U.S. Congress. Even Congress reflects the two-tiered system, i.e., the U.S. House of Representatives (the people) and the U.S. Senate (the overseers), making up the American Republic.

From the perspective of a senior geoscientist and American citizen, I also have considered the available information on the external forces that have helped to create some of the political memes

(racial, anti-Hillary, anti-Democrat, etc) in the first place and how those memes may have “anticipated” the impact of their infection of our systems. This of course involves Russia and its current leadership and the impact of their activities on the United States and all that is involved today, from leading up to and during the 2016 election, our current president, the economic history of yesteryears and yesterday to even how all that impacts the natural resources we need to run our country today and in the future.

Vladimir Putin

It is clear to me that Vladimir Putin has led Russia back into a failed Communist state, brought about by bullying his top-10% oligarchs, just like the good old days of the former Soviet Union. Putin doesn't even try to hide his Dictatorship behind the political system once called Communism; now it is his power over the Oligarchy that is keeping him as leader. A one-time KGB Colonel, Putin apparently decided a few years ago that he doesn't want to create a new world-class state out of the old Russia that would contribute to the world's development without conflict inside Russia, but rather use conflict outside Russia to further his objectives.

This Russian leader employs conflict outside Russia (in many instances fomented by Russian operatives) to distract his people from domestic issues of political struggles and/or from economic failures caused by greedy oligarchs refusing to invest in Russia first to make “Russia great again.”

Some leaders apparently are driven to prevail at any cost, and we have known for decades that concentrated political power tends to corrupt as evidenced throughout the world and throughout history. One would think that Putin could put away enough American dollars in the far reaches of the world's banks for the rainy day when he steps down or is run off by his own oligarchs (or worse), or, even vanquished by the people of Russia through another revolution. The former could be

pleasant and uneventful, but the latter could be dangerous for him and his oligarchs. The conditions in the U.S. are also beginning to look a lot like a failing state as well, with the polarization, attacks on the media and those imbedded in the intelligence and justice system, encouraging disparate distribution of wealth, a dictator as president playing to his “brown shirts” for their support should he need them, all of which laying a foundation for revolution?

The Good Days Have Departed

During the days of the Clinton Presidency, Russia and the U.S. had finally begun to cooperate on a range of cultural, scientific, and economic matters. The U.S. invited Russians women and their babies to immigrate to the U.S. I actually thought a new era of American-Russian cooperation had begun. The Russians and NASA were cooperating on the International Space Station. I even thought they may be sharing secrets (which tend to bond nations into a system of common-interests and stable relations ([more](#))). Putin and previous Russian Presidents even invited Exxon, Conoco-Phillips, Valero, and other American oil and gas companies to help the Russians explore vast areas of prospective land with new American geological and geophysical insights, providing technological developments made recently in the U.S., e.g., in [gas shales](#) by hydrofracing and horizontal well-completion techniques, and in uranium roll-front deposits by [in-situ recovery techniques](#) developed in the U.S.; some companies have had great success for their world stockholders, but also offered great success for Russia's internal benefit by having a product(s) to consume within Russia and to sell on the world's markets.

Improvements in technology helped Russia begin to undertake more ambitious oil and gas, and mining projects with environmental controls built in so as to avoid the technological and [environmental disasters](#) that occurred in the Russian Siberian oil fields that operated decades ago during the Soviet

Union. Many such fields are still wastelands of dead oil and residual tars on the frozen landscapes resulting from blow-outs and poor operation and maintenance, and rusted-out pipelines, especially in the hostile areas of frozen and thawing tundra of Siberia. Russia is now even moving into the [Arctic region](#) to explore for oil and gas and mining with one of the first [ship-borne nuclear power plants](#) to supply electricity in these Arctic projects. It is only a matter of time before they will also move into Antarctica with the same objectives. That is not to say that the U.S. didn't have similar environmental issues over the past 75 years, but U.S. environmental controls fostering improved environmental awareness by oil and gas companies began to [clean-up the areas](#) and the associated contaminated groundwater below those impacted areas.

Somewhere along the timeline, as the Clintons were building good relationships with Putin and his supporting Oligarchs, the Russian train went off the tracks. From a U.S. perspective, I can remember when, out of the blue, Hilary began to talk about getting bad news about Russia's activities that [Putin was changing the rules](#). Many suggested his motives were to give his people someone to fear to distract from the growing economic woes in Russia, mostly driven by the oligarchs draining the Russian economy into their pockets and by transferring billions and billions of rubles from Russian operations into the world banks to enrich themselves and to use in investments outside Russia, such as in the U.S., Japan, etc.

Have We Outgrown Capitalism?

The natural tendency for U.S. capitalism, and wherever it functions, is that of hoarding profits by our richest 1% to 10% citizens since "Reagonomics" and the disproven trickledown economic policy was introduced (and accepted outright at first by most Americans more than 25 years ago). It has now become clear to many U.S. citizens that a once financially healthy middle-class has been drained

over the past 20 years by our own [American Oligarchs](#) (pleasant people as some may be) and associated corporations, churches, and even so-called non-profit corporations. Few of these pay the taxes they could and should pay into the existing social programs designed by FDR and his colleagues to assist the middle and lower income groups in the U.S to counteract the impact of rampant, albeit very successful, Capitalism.

Only a few companies have yet to adapt to employee-owned corporations where management has caps in salaries and benefits and lower management and other employees receive meaningful paychecks according to their contributions to improve the public's well-being. But neither pure [Capitalism](#) nor [Marxism](#) is applicable in today's economic conditions. We have outgrown both, but our system requires an overhaul. Just how many years it will take for the American system to adjust is uncertain today, but the current political conditions in the U.S. could easily precipitate an explosion of changes that would extinguish the current excesses.

FDR Solved a Serious Problem ... For Awhile

This change would not be unlike those of the FDR days when he vaccinated Capitalism with a healthy dose of Socialist-leaning programs funded by the U. S. government. These tempered the rampant economic depression brought on by runaway Capitalism of the late 1930s and inherited from earlier advances during the "[Gilded Age](#)," which witnessed the Rockefellers, Andrew Carnegie, John Pierpont Morgan, and others build gigantic fortunes, while rampant poverty prevailed in the U.S. (there was only a small segment of "middle" income earners at the time). As unions grew and strikes began to break out, the Socialist party, the Communist party, and even the Nazi party were quite active in the American and European labor unions for a while. There was serious unrest all around the country and the world; FDR was informed that he had to either modify the

American economic system or foster a 2nd American Civil War. Facing the threats from Germany and Japan, FDR was able to convince the American 1% to 10%'ers (many of whom called the German war, "Franklin's war") to support his social changes in return for fighting WWII in two parts of the world. More money was to be made by the latter than cost to implement the former. In the early stages of the WWI, American capitalists (DuPont in particular) sold explosives to both England and Germany.

FDR's New Deal resulted in taxing the 1% to 10%'ers at a rate of 95% above a certain level of their income, but many of these programs were considered as socialist and even fascist by the "Republicans" of that day. Then, FDR convinced the industrial leaders of the time to retool their industries toward production of planes, armaments, and munitions to support the war effort, beyond lend-lease, which allowed those participating industries to become very financially successful in the process of winning the war and preparing for the "Cold War" and any skirmishes in the years ahead.

These taxes paid for all ... for a while. Republicans of the recent past have since looked back in attempts to unravel [FDR's reputation](#), probably sensing that a new round of vaccinations may be on the horizon, primarily because of the runaway national debt of more than \$25 trillion created solely by the new "conservative" Republican tax cuts. But out of the earlier post-war political unrest sprang Senator Joseph McCarthy's search for Communists (and Marxists) hiding under the beds in the U.S. (in Hollywood no less), when U.S. Government efforts then cleared the table in the 1950s, and ending in the 1960s in the assassinations of JFK, MLK, and RFK as extremists of unknown roots disappeared back underground, and as the "Republican" and "Democrat" capitalists of the day came to power in the U.S.

We Are All the Same, But ...

American and Russians are like minded, but we, as a people, have been memed very differently and isolated to the extreme to the extent that local propaganda excludes or corrodes the ideas of the other. This is based on each of our local histories, on the economic hardships of the system each country tried to develop, and on the political system that evolved out of those struggles. But one country's system has proven finally to be too restrictive for their people so they threw out their leaders when the Berlin Wall came down. However, the deep state of Russian oligarchs remained intact but embracing a form of Capitalism that operated not unlike the American and Italian organized crime syndicates. After *Glasnost*, the 1% to 10%'ers began to regain the political system until a KGB-trained strongman finally broke through using the tried and true methods learned during the time of the Soviet Union and from the internationalized crime syndicates of today.

Putin now has been in power to one extent or another for some 18 years, but notice that his term as President is getting longer with each election now. It was extended in the recent election from [4 years to 6 years](#). His grab of part of the Ukraine and his long-term interference in the American political elections by hacking our social and industrial Internet systems along with negative, divisive propaganda techniques applied to our social media to affect our elections of 2016, both by electronic means and by capturing our candidate Oligarch wanna-be to rig his election as the new President of the United States. Although Putin no doubt didn't think his meddling would work, he and his minions have succeeded in screwing up the American political system for the time being ... until the U.S. justice system exposes the damages caused by the hacking of the American systems and presidency and the dozens of crimes and cover-up that will likely be exposed soon.

The similarity of the current President and Putin is astounding. Both have their state television, the former in *FoxNews*, the latter in *RT Television* (Outside Russia) and *Pravda* (inside Russia). Both believe that as a President they have unlimited power. Both are paranoid about losing their grip on perceived control. They both court dictators around the world. They try to control their courts and justice system and intimidate their state and federal investigators according to their needs. They both use their political positions to enhance their already substantial wealth and those of their families and friends. But only in the U.S. will the current President be held accountable one day by the justice system. The current occupant will be redressed sooner or later, but in the meantime, he has, for much of his term to date, been blaming foreigners, immigrants, religious sects, political rivals, Democrats, and the free press (cue the first amendment here) for his lack of success in the eyes of that very free liberal press.

The current administration is appropriately moving forward, however, in space and off-world activities toward the Moon and beyond ([more](#)), and in supporting nuclear power plants and associated waste management programs, but this effort has been mixed with coal support only because of the political base involved, clearly rejecting concerns for damage to the climate from [such burning](#). This leaves much to rectify in other areas, such as infrastructure, health care, border issues, etc., and others things Presidents have done because it's challenging and hard.

Where Do We Go from Here?

On Earth, and after the political reckoning, we must also look for ways to bring both Putin and Kim Jong Un (of North Korea), and Iran for that matter, into solidarity with the rest of the world. They have much to offer their people and the world at large. Russia and the U.S. worked well together during the Clinton years. We both decided to reduce our nuclear weapon stock piles. Russia not too long ago

sold us their [nuclear warheads](#). We downgraded the material for use in our nuclear power plants. Unfortunately, the program ended in 2013 (about the time Putin [went off the rails](#)), perhaps marking the beginning of his movement into the Crimea and new tensions in the Ukraine, the beginning of computer and Internet hacking originating in Russia, and even more recently in Russia moving aggressively into the "[Russian Arctic](#)", as mentioned previously.

But social problems always spin out of economic hardship of the middle and lower wage earners in any country. Even with the country's wealth leaving Russia beyond Putin's control, Putin is still believed to be the richest man in the world; the #1 Oligarch in Russia, even when compared to the 1%'ers in the U.S. and UK. In spite of this, the Russian economy is degrading even though it is based on [selling natural gas to Europe](#) and elsewhere, and in selling other natural resources such as [uranium to the U.S. utilities](#) after processing.

Once again, one would think that Putin would want to [join the rest of the world](#) rather than just trying to spread influence by providing the [financing for the construction](#) of Russian nuclear power plants for a few countries. Soon, Russia, with the U.S. sanctions in place, will not be able to afford to back up their promises to these countries, and if in operation, the power plant operation and maintenance requirements will likely turn to China, U.S., France or India to support the safe operation and maintenance of their new power plants. The fact that [Putin has recently threatened to ban Valero, Conoco-Phillips, and Exxon from helping them](#) and also has legislation poised in the Russian Duma to [ban sales of yellowcake uranium](#) to the U.S., further illustrates Putin's penchant for shooting himself in the foot and damaging the Russian economy even further.

We [look forward to an increase in the price](#) of yellowcake caused in part by the Russian ban, and to supporting the expansion of the American

uranium industry in Texas, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, South Dakota, and in Alaska (and their operations in Canada, Australia, Peru, and anywhere countries try to remain friends of the U.S.). We are waiting for support from the U.S. Congress to [protect a clearly strategic industry](#) in the U.S. to provide fuel for our 21st Century needs, e.g., rare earth, and other strategic materials (as defined by the U.S. Geological Survey) and secure fuel for the 99 nuclear reactors that produce more than 20% of the electricity in the U.S. and 30% of the climate-friendly sources of energy.

But, we are also waiting for the U.S. political scene to clear-up and for Putin to become a real world leader, while we shore up our systems against the next time Russia tries to once again tamper with the American elections. Although these threats may come from both Russia and China now, it is not the first time we have fought two foes at one time.

This time we are watching for the signs and will be ready to counter punch both [Russia](#) and [China](#) on all fronts, cyber and economic, now that we have been reminded once again that Democracy wherever it exists is inherently prone to such interference. Its strength rests on the shoulders of its citizens and their right to elect a president, senator, or congressmen and women who have the American people in mind, not just those who have accumulated wealth, albeit they drive the U.S. economy.

It appears to me that we now have two Americas, one is called by some an American Republic (with a two-tiered electoral system), while others consider it an American Democracy. In actuality, it is a Socialist Republic (with all the socialist programs that have been installed since WWII, i.e., Social Security, Medicare, etc.) designed to meet the needs of all citizens. Over the years, America has been evolving, although some of our citizens refuse to admit that change is underway, like it or not.