

In other words, if you want less industry-related environmental destruction, keep the bulk of the world's population in the non-industrialized countries on the brink of starvation, and concentrate the wealth within the industrialized nations so that the bulk of their population is unable to over-consume. If you want to stabilize world population, concentrate your efforts in those non-industrialized countries experiencing exponential population growth by policies that promote starvation and disease, and enforce these policies militarily.

These policies are coherent with those of the American Judeo-Christian cultural Conservatives who oppose family planning, other religions, and secularism in the context of a belief in apocalyptic prophecy. In other words, if the plans of the materialistic conservatives go awry, that's alright too, because true believer's faith will assure them a place in heaven anyway.

One finds in George Bush, and his circle, a confluence of the belief structures that give credence to the assumption of such covert agendas. Perhaps those of us who are searching for practical ways to realize peace and justice in a sustainable world have more to consider than we thought. Perhaps the failure to come to grips with these considerations has a lot to do with the lack of leaders who seek to lead through peaceful conviction rather than pragmatic coercion.

Globalism cannot be isolated just to world trade. The winds blow across borders without hindrance; the ocean waves lap on all shores; the web of life knows no boundaries; humanity, when challenged, is nomadic. It is folly to assume that we will emerge unscathed from heedless over-consumption supported by institutionalized violence. Even if we could, there would be no honor in it.

And indeed, there is no honor in the present leadership. There was no honor in grasping for power not conferred by the electorate. There is no honor in deluding the electorate by fomenting fear and anger. There is no honor in a political system that pretends to be ruled by the votes of the individual which, in reality, is ruled by the dollars of the wealthy. There is no honor in the denial of civil rights. There is no honor in religious bigotry that seeks to demonize and repress the convictions of others. There is no honor in unilateralism cloaked in secrecy. There is no honor in mass death dealt to civilian populations from the safety of impregnable military technology. One senses the insecurity of the present leadership in its insistence on quashing all expressions of dissent rooted in the perception of its illegitimacy and lack of honor.

These times cry out for the emergence of new leaders un-compromised by past accommodation to wealth and power, committed to peaceful solutions to global humanity's dire prospects, and possessed of the knowledge, foresight, and compassionate wisdom to accomplish these goals.

Unintended catastrophic side-effects could take many and unpredictable shapes. Even victory without catastrophe would not result in a stable friendly regime.

Regime change with no coherent, practical plan for what the regime might change *to* indicates short-sighted thinking. One is safe to assume that the disposition of the oil-fields has achieved much more thoroughgoing analysis.

However, we cannot be sure that the apparent short-sightedness of the petro-crusaders precludes the possibility of a long-term view not thought suitable for public consumption. Such a view would never be articulated. A coldly self-serving long-term view that accepts the certainty of environmental degradation eventually impacting human over-population with devastating consequences, might make a number of pragmatic and cynical assumptions. One, coping with world-wide disaster requires centralized control. Two, the primary purpose of that control is to keep the current government/corporate/military in power. Three, the corporate sector must achieve growth and profit, no matter what. Four, having achieved world military superiority, the U.S. must never give it up. Five, in facilitating three and four, the government will be stretched between two poles. On the one hand, the domestic urban populations of the industrialized countries have little tolerance for disruptions in the complex infrastructure and delivery systems that sustain them. On the other hand, foreign urban or landless populations will be the first to starve, and will be the incubators of terrorists and epidemics. Global commerce will carry both to our shores.

Thus, the contrast between the rich and poor nations is fated to become ever more extreme. Since the poor nations supply resources vital to our increasingly fragile industrialized infrastructure, military might must be available to insure their delivery. In such a situation fleeing immigrants and terrorist blowback would be commonplace threats to the industrialized homelands, while militarily seizing vital resources from foreign countries might be required to maintain consumption levels.

Such a bleak view of our collective future would predictably give rise to the sentiment, "If that is inevitably the way its going to be, we better get going positioning ourselves to employ the power to coerce our agendas while we have the irresistible power to do so."

Any policy proposing to down-size consumption as a solution to the problem would be an open admission of the unsustainability of the corporate market economy. Such a policy would never be allowed to prevail. Thus, until billions of people die, or are killed, the need for continual military coercion must be anticipated. In this scenario, the invasion of Iraq is only the overture.

Thus, in a perverse and macabre way, the ends sought by those with conscience, knowledge, and wisdom—a stable world population in harmony with a sustainable environment—are congruent with the militarily enforced centralization of wealth and power sought by the elites of the industrialized nations.

One notices that all of these "evils" are practiced only by non-Middle-Americans—or if by them—only in the strictest secrecy. Politicians present the voter with an endless list of villainous practitioners of evil who can be adduced to be responsible for any of the voter's possible worries, thus becoming a convenient target for latent anger.

True leadership would recognize that building consensus on the basis of trumped-up fear and anger is similar to the ingestion of a poisonous, addicting drug. The day of reckoning must eventually come. True leadership calls on the populace to embrace the positive goals of truth, beauty, and justice. True leadership recognizes that to be human is to err, and that most of what is thought evil is manifested as the result of a mistaken idea.

For pragmatic political Conservatives, the exercise of power and the accumulation of wealth, are the only positive goals. Political Conservatives ally themselves with cultural Conservatives whose principal goal, is the punishment of wrong-doers—as defined by themselves. Predictably, this category is populated with people other than themselves.

The more reflective of the wealthy and powerful holders of Conservative views are quite often aware of those views' self-serving nature. For that reason, the wealthy and powerful go to great lengths to ensure that any accusation of ulterior motivation made against them is socially unacceptable. For they themselves to make such accusations against others is acceptable because their enemies are evil by definition.

There are (at least) two problems with this. One, the people who believe that they benefit by the decisions of conservative leaders are being fooled—unless they are among the wealthy and powerful themselves. Two, while the "evil" enemies are being "dealt with", the real problems with the welfare of the people and the land are ignored or exacerbated.

There is a third problem that adheres specifically to the Bush regime. Small men, when given great power—especially with questionable legitimacy—over-reach themselves in its exercise. One can see this writ large in the rhetoric, decisions, and actions of George W. Bush. He has succumbed to the narcotic of power. Innate insecurity insures constant fear of the erosion of that power. The wave of patriotic emotion attendant on the events of 9/11 catapulted him to the popularity he had failed to achieve at the polls. Because he was in power when a catastrophe was visited on the nation, he acquired the enemies that immeasurably increased his sense of power. Now he is tied to those enemies in a dance of death lest that power slip away.

Since the fanatical architects of our new-found vulnerability perished at the site of their victory, finding evil-doers to punish has proven difficult. It appears now that invading Iraq has always been at the center of the Bush agenda. What was missing was a politically acceptable pretext. As opposition mounts to what has revealed itself to be a flimsily concealed camouflage for grabbing Iraqi oil, Bush ever more hysterically demands Hussein's head on a platter. He has worked himself into a corner. If he backs down, he loses face. If he goes ahead, he goes alone, hoping for the vindication of an easy victory, mindless of the instability and destabilizing precedent that he creates.

A CALL FOR NEW LEADERSHIP—9/30/02

Written in September of 2002, when the Iraq war resolution was being bullied through Congress by threat of branding opponents as unpatriotic to an electorate soon to go to the polls, this screed was right on the mark as far as Iraq was concerned. I sincerely hope that the paragraphs which follow that analysis are not as prophetic.

At this time in America, there is a general crisis of leadership that is gradually finding a focus on the Bush regime. We have experienced grave dysfunctions in all the major power centers: a failure to recognize and prioritize environmental imperatives, political discourse conducted in rhetoric less and less connected to reality, the intelligence failure to prevent 9/11, the crash of the stock market, the greed of the wealthy in stark contrast to growing poverty, widespread corporate fraud, pederasty by Catholic priests, the impotence of the Democratic Party, the failure of the media to properly inform the public, a military bloated with offensive weapons unable to mount an effective national defense.

Such a broad-based indictment would seem to summon forth new leaders with the vision and courage to chart a new path, but when candidates appear they are quickly shown to be somehow compromised or ignorable. Meanwhile, we—as a society—stagger along like a drunk who thinks he's quite okay because he can still walk and talk, careless of a nearby precipice.

What is so severely lacking is *positive* leadership, leadership that charts a course toward a better future for everyone. Such a leadership would make its first priority the reining in of the technological assault on the natural world. Its second priority would be coping with exponential human population growth. Beyond that, people have a multiplicity of needs and aspirations that need to be met in the context of these two inter-related mega-challenges.

Unfortunately, any really serious attempt to address these problems is a threat to the leaders of the existing power hierarchies. Population control is anathema to Catholic dogma and the Sharia alike. For the capitalist, unlimited exploitation of nature is thought properly constrained only by the unseen hand of the market. Institutionalized greed is thought essential to "freedom". Anarchic rival nationalisms dictate entrenched military establishments whose very existence is required by their very existence, which—when used—benefit no one, even when victorious. Calling attention in the media to primary problems chases away a weary electorate—grateful for what little they have—who want to believe that somehow everything will turn out right.

The present political leadership, seeking ever greater power and wealth, knows that the way to generate votes is to play on fear, and anger. Thus the cliché rhetoric for problem-solving policy is "the war on" the evil-du-jour. There are an endless variety of evils to vanquish: the evil of drugs, the evil of abortion, the evil of terrorism, the evil of communism, the evil of relativism, the evil of pan-theistic environmentalism, the evil of sex for pleasure, the evil of atheism, the evil of laziness, the evil of big government, the evil of permissiveness, the evil of being soft on crime, the evil of pornography.