

Time to Take the Gloves off with Obama

Contributed by Jan Lundberg and Jeff Gerritsen
18 June 2009

The clock is ticking, and we are not building life boats. As the population's options close and a harder ecological and socioeconomic fall is assured more each day, Barack Obama is leading the thumb twiddlers, albeit with eloquence and charm. What passes for policy debate today seldom reckons with the life and death issues of climate extinction, petrocollapse, and the social chaos ahead.

Obama is dealing with a heck of a lot, granted. This alone is supposed to quiet the people quite a bit, and despite the Depression, ecocide and unending war, it has worked rather well. With his likability and intelligence – after the "Führer Bushler" -- Obama is thus the perfect man for our times if you're basically clinging to the status quo.

Take health care (more accurately, medical care). It is certainly a burning issue, what with increasing suffering across the board both physiologically and financially. One in six dollars goes to the attempt to buy health through treatments. But throwing a trillion dollars at disease and pain will do nothing that lasts if we still live in a toxic environment and if diet remains one of processed foods grown in depleted soils.

This illustrates that Obama and the rest of the politicians, medical industry and the corporate world are operating within a hopeless cultural straight-jacket. This milieu is enforced through every speech, commercial, and policy. So, whether we are willing to cut Obama generous slack or not, he is unable to be effective as the general crisis grows.

It is in areas where Obama can be effective that popular agitation can and must take place. So far, this is constrained by the fact that Obama has a nice smile and is the first black man to take office as President and Commander In Chief. I say "Wow!" too. But is the Obama we hope exists really the man behind the curtain? Without much critical thinking, while Der Bushler is still in our memory, Obama gets a free pass — aided by the nation's reluctance to hit the streets en masse as happens in Iran, France, Mexico and elsewhere.

The consensus among "progressives" seems to be "Obama's a nice guy, and he gets it, but he's not allowed to do much."

However, he has made many a presidential decision for the worse on many issues. Even as president-elect he urged the White House to cut loose the \$700 billion bail-out for the financial sector. This was a blank check, we all found out, but it was an "honest gesture" of faith in the capitalist system — synonymous with the good ol' Red, White and Blue. There is the true problem.

As people romanticize the U.S. and "Mr. President" there can be no meaningful change. So the Commander In Chief must do as his masters dictate and as he pleases: to keep the profitable war machine well oiled, and keep Detroit cranking out death machines in the name of jobs. One consequence of a "middle" position is serious disappointment: One of our contributing editors, after reading a draft of this essay, pointed out, "There is a name for letting all the war criminals/bank embezzlers/torturers go without prosecution. It is called collusion."

The disappointments keep adding up. With today's news on the Obama administration's letting down gay federal couples for health care, a whole constituency has been alienated.

Like all politicians, there are two sides to Barack Obama. He knows that driving cars is a lifestyle to question, as he said

last December. But in his slick style this passes for action, while his pen-strokes squander the nation's waning ability to convert industrial capacity to humane tools of sustainability. The longer this is delayed, in hopes of resumed car sales on the former scale, the less chance there is of any smoothness to a post-peak oil transition.

The "American People" have ceased to be productive. Rather, they have been turned into consumers whose buying power has floated an economy of tacky expansion. As we have seen, this came from "funny money" from ballooning debt and fleeting "home equity." These mechanisms have nothing to do with forging a community with self-reliance. But that is our task.

Obama may agree with that, on some emotional level, but he cannot buck the corporate elite. The same old financial establishment surrounds him, Israel lobby to boot. He can have a hip First Lady who plants a "Victory Garden," but unless action across the board deals with food security and the need to get off fossil fuels now, Obama serves to stall action for survival as he defends the status quo of exploitation both human and of nature.

When success is defined as one's using the least possible amount of energy — as hoped for by Republican Congressman Roscoe Bartlett — our culture is based on the false security of materialism and destruction for profit. What Obama has by now figured out is, we have a Waste Economy. Why anyone wants to see the inequitable Waste Economy resume growth is exactly why anyone sells out future generations for short-term comfort.

Obama's Mistakes/Crimes

Mountain-top removal for coal mining is implicit in "clean coal" and the use of the electric grid. Obama fully knows this, but has gone along with making much of Appalachia a national sacrifice zone. As with nuclear, coal is for unneeded power that has to date been unquestioned.

Obama is schizoid and hypocritical on the subject of raising healthy, educated children when he says turning off the TV is necessary, yet he feels he must bomb Afghani and Pakistani children in "collateral damage."

The banksters and financial fraudsters, along with the non-federal private Federal Reserve, are Obama's most powerful constituency. Ironically, as they help bring down the financial system and the economy, they are the unwitting heroes of collapse. But betrayal is betrayal: "What in gods' name are you doing listening to Geithner and Summers?"

The real contest is between the corporado elite and the common people. The corporados know their end is in sight, so they're trying to take all they can before money becomes paper "rubbish," as Dmitry Orlov predicts.

Is an honest mistake being made? Actually, history is a guide. In 1931 President Hoover bailed out the banks in an attempt to unfreeze the credit markets. It didn't work then and it won't work now.

Mr. President: "What in the hell do you think you will accomplish by sending troops to Afghanistan? Don't you know empires go to Afghanistan to die?!"

If you're for justice and jobs, GM should be forced as part of the bankruptcy deal to rebuild the rail trolley systems they destroyed in conspiracy with Standard Oil of California, Phillips Petroleum, Firestone Tire and Mac Truck in the 1940s

and '50s.

The car will not be a part of our future -- peak oil we see to that. So why try to prop up the car infrastructure and its related oil-dependent industries?

Economic expansion without cheap energy and a compromised ecosystem is a dead end.

What is Obama's vision for this country? Where's the change?

If we take off our rose colored glasses we see Obama is the perfect defender of the system, so he cannot be our friend. He is basically a kinder and gentler George Bush. And would Hillary Clinton really have been a less progressive president than Obama? I think we've found out: we bought the same model, just a different color and gender.

As Obama-worship peters out and the leftover campaign signs finally come down, we have to push the government to do the right thing -- to the extent possible. Yet, as Thomas Jefferson spelled out, the power is not vested in Obama, but in ourselves. Da Prez Man has himself, as a former community organizer, admitted same.

* * * * *

"Dissolve the U.S.: an Option for Proactive Change before Collapse - Will Obama be a Greater Gorbachev?" by Jan Lundberg, December 18, 2008:

culturechange.org