

America Is Like a Dangerous Beast in Its Last Gasps

The world's chief purveyor of chaos and death is over extended, nearing its end, and extremely dangerous

By John Chuckman *

When I think of America's place in the world today, the image that comes to mind is of a very large animal, perhaps a huge bull elephant or even prehistoric mammoth, which long roamed as the unchallenged king of its domain but has become trapped by its own missteps, as caught in a tar pit or some quicksand, and it is violently flailing about, making a terrifying noises in its effort to free itself and re-establish its authority.

Any observer immediately knows the animal ultimately cannot succeed but certainly is frightened by the noise and crashing that it can sustain for a considerable time.

I think that is the pretty accurate metaphor for the situation of the United States today, still a terribly large and powerful society but one finding itself trapped after a long series of its own blunders and errors, a society certain ultimately to become diminished in its prestige and relative power with all the difficulties which that will entail for an arrogant people having a blind faith in their own rightness.

America simply cannot accept its mistakes or that it was ever wrong, for Americanism much resembles a fundamentalist religion whose members are incapable of recognizing or admitting they ever followed anything but the divine plan.

America has made a costly series of errors over the last half century, demonstrating to others that the America they may have been in awe of in, say, 1950, and may have considered almost godlike and incapable of mistakes, has now proved itself indisputably, in field after field, as often not even capable of governing itself. The irony of a people who are seen as often unable to govern themselves advising others how to govern themselves brings a distinct note of absurdity to American foreign policy.

America's establishment, feeling its old easy superiority in the world beginning to slip away in a hundred different ways, seems determined to show everyone it still has what it takes, determined to make others feel its strength, determined to weaken others abroad who do not accept its natural superiority, determined to seize by brute force and dirty tricks advantages which no longer come to it by simply superior performance.

Rather than learn from its errors and adjust its delusional assumptions, America is determined to push and bend people all over the world to its will and acceptance of its leadership. But you cannot reclaim genuine leadership once you have been exposed enough times in your bad judgment, and it is clear you are on the decline, just as you cannot once others realize that they can do many things as well or better than you.

In the end, policies which do not recognize scientific facts are doomed. Policies based on wishes and ideology do not succeed over the long run, unless, of course, you are willing to suppress everyone who disagrees with you and demand their compliance under threat. The requirement for an imperial state in such a situation is international behavior which resembles the internal behavior of an autocratic leader such as Stalin, and right now that is precisely where the United States is headed.

Stalin's personality had a fair degree of paranoia and no patience for the views of others. He felt constantly threatened by potential competitors and he used systematic terror to keep everyone intimidated and unified under him.

Stalin's sincere belief in a faulty economic system that was doomed from its birth put him in a position similar to that of America's oligarchs today. They have a world imperial system that is coming under increasing strain and challenge because others are growing and have their own needs and America simply does not have the flexibility to accommodate them.

America's oligarchs are not used to listening to the views of others. Stalin's belief in a system that was more an ideology than a coherent economic model is paralleled by the quasi-religious tenets of Americanism, a set of beliefs which holds that America is especially blessed by the Creator and all things good and great are simply its due.

Dominion over the Earth?

Americanism blurrily assumes that God's promise in the Old Testament that man should have dominion over the earth's creatures applies now uniquely to Americans. Such thinking arose during many years of easy superiority, a superiority that was less owing to intrinsic merits of American society than to a set of fortuitous circumstances, many of which are now gone.

In Vietnam, America squandered countless resources chasing after a chimera its ideologues insisted was deadly important, never once acknowledging the fatal weaknesses built right into communism from its birth. Communism was certain eventually to fail because of economic falsehoods which were part of its conception, much as a child born with certain genetic flaws is destined for eventual death.

America's mad rush to fight communism on all fronts was in keeping with the zealotry of America's Civic Religion, but it was a huge and foolish practical judgment which wasted colossal resources.

In Vietnam, America ended in something close to total shame – literally defeated on the battlefield by what seemed an inconsequential opponent, having also cast aside traditional ethical values in murdering great masses of people who never threatened the United States, murder on a scale (3 million) comparable to the Holocaust.

The United States used weapons and techniques of a savage character: napalm, cluster bombs, and secret mass terror programs. The savagery ripped into the fabric of America's own society, dividing the nation almost as badly as its Civil War once had. America ended reduced and depleted in many respects and paid its huge bills with devalued currency.

Following Vietnam, it has just been one calamity after another revealing the same destructive inability to govern, the same thought governed by zealotry, right down to

the 2008 financial collapse which was caused by ignoring sound financial management and basically instituting a system of unlimited greed. The entire world was jolted and hurt by this stupidity whose full consequences are not nearly played out.

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were completely unnecessary, cost vast sums, caused immense misery, and achieved nothing worth achieving. We now know what was kept hidden, that more than one million Iraqis died in an invasion based entirely on lies. These wars also set in motion changes whose long-term effects have yet to be felt. Iraq, for example, has just about had its Kurdish, oil-producing region hived off as a separate state.

Mishandling Russia

America's primitive approach to the Soviet Union's collapse, its sheer triumphalism and failure to regard Russia as important enough to help or with which to cooperate, ignored America's own long-term interests. After all, the Russians are a great people with many gifts, and it was inevitable that they would come back from a post-collapse depression to claim their place in the world.

So how do the people running the United States now deal with a prosperous and growing Russia, a Russia which reaches out in the soundest traditional economic fashion for cooperation and partnership in trade and projects? Russia has embraced free trade, a concept Americans trumpeted for years whenever it was to their advantage, but now for Russia is treated as dark and sinister.

Here America fights the inevitable power of economic forces, something akin to fighting the tide or the wind, and only for the sake of its continued dominance of another continent. Americans desperately try to stop what can only be called natural economic arrangements between Russia and Europe, natural because both sides have many services, goods, and commodities to trade for the benefit of all. America's establishment wants to cut off healthy new growth and permanently to establish its primacy in Europe even though it has nothing new to offer.

America's deliberately dishonest interpretation of Russia's measured response to an induced coup in Ukraine is used to generate an artificial sense of crisis, but despite the pressures that America is capable of exerting on Europe, we sense Europe only goes along to avoid a public squabble and only for so long as the costs are not too high.

The most intelligent leaders in Europe recognize what the United States is doing but do not want to clash openly, although the creation of the Minsk Agreement came pretty close to a polite rejection of America's demand for hardline tactics.

The coup in Ukraine was intended to put a hostile government in control of a long stretch of Russian border, a government which might cooperate in American military matters and which would serve as an irritant to Russia. But you don't get good results with malicious policy.

So far the coup has served only to hurt Ukraine's economy, security and long-term interests. It has a government which is seen widely as incompetent, a government which fomented unnecessary civil war, a government which may have shot down a

civilian airliner, and a government in which no one, including in the West, has much faith.

Its finances are in turmoil, many important former economic connections are severed, and there is no great willingness by Europe, especially an economically-troubled Europe, to assist it. It is not an advanced or stable enough place to join the EU because that would just mean gigantic subsidies being directed to it from an already troubled Europe.

And the idea of its joining NATO is absolutely a non-starter both because it can't carry its own weight in such an organization and because that act would cross a dangerous red line for Russia.

Kiev is having immense problems even holding the country together as it fights autonomous right-wing outfits like the Azov Battalion in the southeast who threaten the Minsk Agreement, as the regime tries to implement military recruiting in western Ukraine with more people running away than joining up, as it finds it must protect its own President with a Praetorian Guard of Americans from some serious threats by right-wing militias unhappy with Kiev's failures, as it must reckon with the de facto secession of Donetsk and the permanent loss of Crimea – all this as it struggles with huge debts and an economy in a nosedive.

America is in no position to give serious assistance to Ukraine, just plenty of shop-worn slogans about freedom and democracy. These events provide a perfect example of the damage America inflicts on a people with malicious policy intended only to use them to hurt others.

There is such a record of this kind of thing by America that I am always surprised when there are any takers out there for the newest scheme. One remembers Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in 1975 encouraging the Iraqi Kurds to revolt against Saddam Hussein and then leaving them in the lurch when the dictator launched a merciless suppression.

I also think of the scenes at the end of the Vietnam War as American helicopters took off in cowardly fashion from the roof of the embassy leaving their Vietnamese co-workers, tears streaming down their faces, vainly grasping for the undercarriages of helicopters, a fitting and shameful end to a truly brainless crusade.

Messing up Ukraine

I don't know but I very much doubt that the present government of Ukraine can endure, and it is always possible that it will slip into an even more serious civil war with factions fighting on all sides, something resembling the murderous mess America created in Libya. Of course, such a war on Russia's borders would come with tremendous risks.

The American aristocracy doesn't become concerned about disasters into which they themselves are not thrust, but a war in Ukraine could easily do just that. In ironic fashion, heightened conflict could mark the beginning of the end of the era of European subservience to America. Chaos in Ukraine could provide exactly the shock Europe needs to stop supporting American schemes before the entire continent or even the world is threatened.

I remind readers that while Russia's economy is not as large as America's, it is a country with a strong history in engineering and science, and no one on the planet shares its terrifying experiences with foreign invasion. So it has developed and maintains a number of weapons systems that are second to none. Each one of its new class of ballistic missile submarines, and Russia is building a number of them, is capable of hitting 96 separate targets with thermo-nuclear warheads, and that capability is apart from rail-mounted ICBMs, hard-site ICBMs, truck-mounted missiles, air-launched cruise missiles, sea-launched cruise missiles, and a variety of other fearsome weapons.

Modern Russia does not make threats with this awesome power, and you might say Putin follows the advice of Theodore Roosevelt as he walks softly but carries a big stick, but I do think it wise for all of us to keep these things in mind as America taunts Russia and literally play a game of chicken with Armageddon.

I don't believe America has a legitimate mandate from anyone to behave in this dangerous way. Europe's smartest leaders, having lived at the very center of the Cold War and survived two world wars, do understand this and are trying very carefully not to allow things to go too far, but America has some highly irresponsible and dangerous people working hard on the Ukraine file, and accidents do happen when you push things too hard.

The Israel Obsession

In another sphere of now constant engagement, instead of sponsoring and promoting fair arrangements in the Middle East, America has carried on a bizarre relationship with Israel, a relationship which is certainly against the America's own long term interests, although individual American politicians benefit with streams of special interests payments – America's self-imposed, utterly corrupt campaign financing system being ultimately responsible – in exchange for blindly insisting Israel is always right, which it most certainly is not.

An important segment of Israel's population is American, and they just carried over to Israel the same short-sightedness, arrogance and belligerence which characterize America, so much so, Israel may legitimately be viewed as an American colony in the Middle East rather than a genuinely independent state.

Its lack of genuine independence is reflected also in its constant dependence on huge subsidies, on its need for heavily-biased American diplomacy to protect it in many forums including the United Nations, and on its dependence upon American arm-twisting and bribes in any number of places, Egypt's generous annual American pension requiring certain behaviors being one of the largest examples.

Here, too, inevitability has been foolishly ignored. The Palestinians are not going anywhere, and they have demonstrated the most remarkable endurance, yet almost every act of Israel since its inception, each supported by America, has been an effort to make them go away through extreme hardship and abuse and violence, looking towards the creation of Greater Israel, a dangerous fantasy idea which cannot succeed but it will fail only after it has taken an immense toll.

Despite America's constant diplomatic and financial pressure on other states to support its one-sided policy here, there are finally a number of signs that views are

turning away from the preposterous notion that Israel is always right and that it can continue indefinitely with its savage behavior.

Recently, we have had a great last effort by America and covert partners to secure Israel's absolute pre-eminence in the Middle East through a whole series of destructive intrusions in the region – the “Arab Spring,” the reverse-revolution in Egypt, the smashing and now dismemberment of Iraq, the smashing and effective dismemberment of Libya, and the horrible, artificially-induced civil war in Syria which employs some of the most violent and lunatic people on earth from outside and gives them weapons, money and refuge in an effort to destroy a stable and relatively peaceful state.

I could go on, but I think the picture is clear: in almost every sphere of American governance, internally and abroad, America's poor political institutions have yielded the poorest decisions. America has over-extended itself on every front, has served myths rather than facts, has let greed run its governing of almost everything, and has squandered resources on achieving nothing of worth.

I view America's present posture in the world – supporting dirty wars and coups in many places at the same time and treating others as game pieces to be moved rather than partners – as a desperate attempt to shake the world to gain advantages it couldn't secure through accepted means of governance and policy.

America is that great beast, bellowing and shaking the ground, and for that reason, it is extremely dangerous.

*** John Chuckman is former chief economist for a large Canadian oil company.**