

Why does the world hate the USA? : A Politically Incorrect Approach

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Washington DC - May 2007

“Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety”

Benjamin Franklin²

“It's all about what you believe, not what you know”

Claus Christian Malzahn³

A tale of two systems

The progress generated by the *freedom system* –misnamed capitalism- vis-à-vis the *servitude system* –misnamed socialism- is abysmal. The poor and the working people, the same rallied by Marx and Engels in their famous “Manifesto”, have benefited from the freedom system at a rate that makes any comparison with the servitude system an exercise into blatancy. It is indeed so obvious that the country that epitomizes the freedom system, the USA, is flooded with immigrants some of which literally die to be able to take-on its opportunities. If there is the slightest doubt compare the performance of East- and West Germany under either systems or that of North and South Korea. The latter were like the “controlled experiments” in science and the results are one-sided.

The question then is why the USA, the paradigm of economic progress and political freedom is not admired by the people of the rest of the world but is either hated or derided by the majority? These feelings are so deep and ingrained that after thousands innocents, from all over the world, suffered a horrible death during the cowardly attack to the World Trade Center many radio talk-shows around the world were swamped with calls from people who said, in one way or another, that the US “deserved it”.

The core of this essay is that at the bottom of the USA haters and deriders there is a varied blends of ignorance, envy and greed.

Active Ignorance

“Nothing is worse than active ignorance”

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Different degrees of ignorance are a critical ingredient in explaining hate-USA syndrome (HUSAS.) We are all indeed ignorant in one field or another, or by not fully

¹ I appreciate helpful suggestions from Alex Chafuen, Valeriano Garcia-Negro and Carlos Rivas. Naturally, I am the only responsible for the opinion expressed in this essay.

² *Historical Review of Pennsylvania, 1759*

³ *“Evil Americans, Poor Mullahs” Spiegel on line March 29, 2007*

mastering any particular field. However, most people who detest the USA system add to this common ignorance a *set of beliefs that are plain wrong* giving way to active ignorance. For example, the leaders of the pack deriding the USA are or have been quite wrong about the basic tenets of a market economy. The political ideology of those leaders may have different, complicated and diffused psychological roots but a particular segment of active ignorance is common to all of them, namely they fail to grasp the most elementary principle of economics.

A famed activist like Karl Marx was totally incorrect in his economic theory but his modern sympathizers ignore such fact. Jean-Paul Sartre, and his feminist companion Simone de Beauvoir knotted Marxism with existentialism and were the leaders of several generations of USA haters and deriders but they were active ignorant in how market economy really works. Another example of active economic illiteracy was the novelist and political activist Julio Cortazar, who made trips from his Parisian residence to Managua encouraging socialists in Nicaragua. In an interview for Life magazine he expressed that the “proof” that USA exploited Latin America lay bare on the fact that (during the seventies) remittances of profits from USA companies based in the region had been larger than their investment in the same region. This, according to Cortazar, was proof that those corporations imbibed resources from poorer countries. Economic ignorance prevented the influential novelist to establish the difference between the stock of capital that those corporations had invested, and that he failed to identify, from the flow of profits from such stock⁴.

Do the USA-haters and deriders know the magnitude of private US assistance to the third world? Official, as opposed to private development assistance has not been very effective in improving living conditions in the third world. However, there is a different story with private donations. Privately funded US direct assistance to poor countries is very effective and very large, in fact it is by far the largest in the world but do USA-haters know this? Private assistance to fight AIDS in Africa through the Bill Gates Foundation is saving hundred of thousand lives. Private philanthropic activities channeled to the developing world include diverse things, like books, school buses, university funding and scholarships and helping the very sick get medical care in the best US medical centers. Do USA-haters know that many of the fire-trucks and well equipped medical emergency vans running in many of their inner cities have been donated by private USA non for profit organizations? Do they know that when they go to the hospital the medicines that give relief to their illnesses were originally developed citizens of the empire? Do they know that the computer and the Internet they use to write to their family/friends/business contacts originally came from the empire? Do they know that when they go to the dentist the pain killers that help them tolerate the drilling was originally developed by the empire?

⁴ In other words, and by the same logic, if in a particular year Cortazar had made an initial deposit in his French bank and the following year withdrew the interest he would be “exploiting” the bank. Ernesto “Che” Guevara expressed the same flawed argument when referring to the sources of US economic wealth.

Ignorance, like many diseases can be, if not eradicated, reduced and this reduction could significantly help reduce envy. Most people rallying against visiting US presidents are ignorant of basic facts regarding the “empire sucking resources” from poor countries. In fact without the research and development carried out in the US the rest of the world would be substantially poorer, but are ordinary people of the rest of the world fully aware of this? Moreover, do those people know that if it were not because of the empire the staple foods that they consume would be much more expensive? Do they know that the car they drive is cheaper because a century ago Ford invented chain production? Do they know that many vaccines that help their families, including their dogs and cats, live a healthier and longer life were developed in the empire? They ignore the fact that without the US economy demanding their goods and services the value of their exports would be halved? They probably do not know that the jetliners’ engine that they fly was made by General Electric, or that Boeing is based in the state of Washington. We could go on this list for a long time. However, let us be more specific and take some examples of great contributions to world welfare by the USA that is ignored by the masses and cleverly hidden from them by some of the “anti-imperialist” leaders and intellectuals.

The “green revolution” was not a social or indigenous revolution *a la* Fidel Castro or *a la* Evo Morales, but took, by far, more people out of poverty and starvation than any social revolution, central engineered plans or governmental poverty reduction programs. The green revolution not only alleviated poverty but in fact is credited with saving over a billion people from starvation. It was no less a symbol of “imperialism” than the Rockefeller Foundation that funded American agricultural scientist Ernest Burlaug research in Mexico that permitted the extraordinary development of high yielding agricultural varieties. These varieties along with the teaching to local farmers on how to cultivate them were then introduced in Mexico, Pakistan and India. The results were stunning: with roughly the same acreage for wheat, and in only five years, Pakistan increased its productivity by almost 100 percent. It produced 4.6 million tons in 1965 and in 1970 its wheat production had jumped to 8.4 million tons. India's production was 20 million tons in 1970, up from 12.3 million 1965 and Mexico, since 1963 became net exporter of wheat. The rest of the world, including China in 1980, eagerly adopted the new high yielding agricultural varieties. Because of this contribution Burlaug received the Nobel price in 1970. This was a triumph for Burlaug as much as it was for the Rockefeller foundation and the freedom system that allowed both of them to make this contribution to humanity.

Under the leadership of the USA the green revolution has become a “permanent revolution”. So far, the United States has approved more than 70 genetically modified crops. These crops, which can be grown commercially, include alfalfa, canola, papaya, potato, rice, squash, soy beans, sugar beets and tomato. The first African engineered crop to go into field trials is a type of maize resistant to a devastating virus is expected to be planted in 2007.

Advances in biotechnologies, pioneered and developed around the world by the empire are contributing to the development of functional foods that will help prevention and treatment for many diseases. Functional foods are those with components associated with the prevention and treatment of high cholesterol and hypertension, diabetes, arthritis and old age dementia. Plants are modified to deliver more vitamins enhancing the immune system –for example increasing iron and vitamin C-, protecting against cancer; providing more essential fatty acids that serve as energy sources. Bananas and tomatoes are being engineered to deliver, among other things, antibodies for E. coli bacteria-induced diarrhea, a major killer of children around the world. Genetically modified tobacco, is being used to help produce a vaccine that fights against a type of lymphoma.

Is the rest of the world “exploited” by having to pay patents on new agricultural products? Some countries do pay patents on new seeds and agricultural advances while others pay part of the patent and some only very little if anything. However, without patents there would be no progress and we would be immersed in a Soviet-style model namely no paid patents but no new agricultural products either.

By end 2005, the empire’s economic and political system had generated 165 Nobel price winners⁵. Russia counted 21 and China 5. This does not include achievements in many fields due to several generations of team work and is a measure of the gap between the freedom vis-à-vis the servitude systems. Many products and knowledge generated by those Nobel Prize winners implied significant improvement in the life of people who have the hate-USA syndrome.

The tremendous beneficial impact of the freedom paradigm can be encapsulated by partial references to the vaccines that now are commonplace and widely used by HUSAS, for example:

Poliomyelitis, after massive field trials involving nearly 2 million children, the Salk vaccine was shown to be effective in preventing polio and by 1962 the oral Sabin vaccine was introduced. In most of the world thanks to the freedom system polio has been eliminated.

Smallpox, the modern vaccine was taken from a weak strain of virus called the New York City Board of Health strain. It was produced by Wyeth Laboratories and licensed under the name Dryvax. Currently the world is free from small pox and “big business” like Wyeth and its researchers has to be given credit for it.

Tetanus toxoid vaccine, now widely used around the world was developed in the empire by P. Descombey in 1924, and was widely used to prevent tetanus induced by battle wounds during WW2.

Yellow Fever Dr. Walter Reed demonstrated that the specific agent of yellow fever is in the blood and that passage through the body of a mosquito is not necessary to its development. The results of his experiments led to the development of a vaccine.

⁵ Some of them were foreign born but became US nationals doing their scientific work in the USA.

Hepatitis B In 1967 Dr. Baruch Blumberg together with a number of colleagues discovered the hepatitis b virus, and in 1969 he and Dr. Irving Millman developed the basic principle for producing a vaccine against the disease. The first hepatitis b vaccine sophisticated enough to be tested on human beings, was developed in USA by Messrs. Szmuness and Hilleman

Diphtheria Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, announced that three vaccine scientists, Drs. Ron Eby, Velupillai Puvanesarajah and Dace Madore, had been awarded the prestigious Discoverers Award from the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America for the development of Prevnar(R), Pneumococcal 7-valent Conjugate Vaccine (Diphtheria CRM197 Protein), the first conjugate vaccine to help prevent invasive pneumococcal disease caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* in infants and children up to the age of two.

The Internet, while a graduate student at MIT Leonard Kleinrock created the basic principles of packet switching, the technology at the bottom of the Internet. He developed the mathematical theory of data networks. This was a decade before the birth of the Internet which occurred when his host computer at UCLA became the first node of the Internet in September 1969.

A complete list of contributions by the empire to the world welfare would complete several books. It would include Haviland Carrier the father of the air conditioning system that people with HUSAS surely enjoy during summer days, Steven Sasson the inventor of the digital camera that USA haters take during their vacations; General Motors whose development of air-bags, makes the auto trips of USA haters safer; NASA whose development and launching of satellites provides USA haters the opportunity to watch their favorite soccer games from all over the world, and many more.

Compare all the above to the contribution to humanity by the so-called socialist countries. Then if facts speak for themselves what is the origin of the hate-USA syndrome. Is it idiocy or is it plain ignorance intertwined with envy and greed?

Envy, Greed and the “progressive” paradigm

“Our envy of others devours us most of all”

Alexander Solzhenitsyn

“When it is a question of money, everyone is of the same religion”

— Voltaire (*Francois-Marie Arouet*)

Not only ignorance, but ignorance intertwined with envy and greed help explain HUSAS. Envy is a cultural trait very difficult to eradicate. In most countries people tend to envy their rich neighbor, in particular a newly rich neighbor. And when they surreptitiously scratch his new car they think that the “sob” became rich because of his corruption or his political or economic privilege. The perpetrator thinks that the rich has massed his wealth at the expense of somebody else, including himself. The same phenomenon occurs to countries that envy their richer neighbors. In the many centuries of civilization the USA is indeed a “new rich” and as such is envied by the old rich (Europe) and by the underdeveloped world.

Many “progressive” intellectuals as a class benefit from the servitude system that they rationalize. Those intellectuals while enjoying the liberty to express their ideas provided by the freedom system (Cortazar did not move to Moscow or to Managua, but to Paris) support the servitude system because such systems, by subsidizing their activities, feed their greed. Servitude systems consider that “intellectual” activities framed within the state ideology, are “superior” and thus they heavily invest on them. This focus, for example, permitted poor countries like the ex-Soviet Union and Cuba to have world-class ballets and sportsmen.

Greed is a particular human behavior that has been ascribed to businessmen and stereotyped the freedom system. A fat CEO smoking a huge cigar, sitting on his presidential arm-chair and with his foot pressing the neck of a common laborer, epitomizes the stereotype of the hated USA capitalist. Contrast this image with real CEO. Bill Gates and thousands others like him have generated employment opportunities for thousands. At the same time they have generously endowed hospitals, universities and myriad non-profit organizations with billion dollars, including helping the poor *outside* de USA.

Is there greed in the freedom system? Of course there is. There is a lot of greed in free societies. Greed, like envy, is part of human nature. The difference with the so called “progressive” systems is that in the freedom system the “search for money” generates what economist call “positive externalities”. Probably, many entrepreneurs like Henry Ford, Steve Jobs and Warren Buffett were driven by selfish interests, but in their quest to satiate them they created wealth not only for them but for thousands and millions around the world, these wealth creation constitute positive externalities.

Greed is also behind the USA-haters and under the servitude system this is manifested through demands for income redistribution. The processes of income redistribution negatively affect the creation of new wealth. This wealth destruction constitutes “negative externalities”. Curiously in these systems greed is systematically hidden under the wrap of “solidarity” and “social justice”.

Greed, masked as equity or social justice, is the real motive behind progressive taxation If you are poorer than your neighbor you have the right to demand from him a portion of his pie, otherwise there would be no “social justice”. The richer your neighbor is the higher the *relative* portion that your selfishness demands that you take away from him. God and the political system were generous to your neighbor and because he will not voluntarily provide a share of this wealth to you, you have the right to demand the “system” to force him to give it to you. The “progressive” thought cloaks greed-based income redistribution under the name of “equitable” tax system.

Progressive taxation stems from three sources. First, the demand of some income groups pushing an agenda to appropriate resources generated by other income groups. Appropriating other’s people resources can be done with a gun or with a law. The

majority prefers a law empowering the State to use a gun on their behalf. Second, the demands by those groups are met by the supply of politicians and Member of Parliament. Those elements are more than willing to cater to the demand of such income groups because if they can tax only one person and distribute those resources to 10 other persons (including themselves) they will win the next elections by a ratio of 10 to one. Third, economists and many institutions, with a faulty definition of equity are more than willing to provide intellectual respectability and on-demand technical assistance to help implement progressive taxation.

An equitable income structure would be generated by a full-fledged freedom system because this system tends to be free from bias or favoritism. The important thing is that income distribution be directly related to productivity (which should be free from bias) and to the quantity of individual resources (which should be free from favoritism). This definition would lead us to measures to eliminate monopolies, enhance competition, open the economy, invest in human capital, reduce unnecessary regulations and barriers to entry, strengthen the judicial system and value the importance of transparency. It will never lead to progressive taxation.

Greed, disguised as solidarity, is the real motive behind regional income equalization schemes. Voracity, under the facade of solidarity, is also manifested within countries when inhabitants of poor regions force those of richer regions to re-distribute their resources to them through revenue-sharing laws. For example, the rich southern zone of Brazil has to subsidize the poor northeast. The rich province of Buenos Aires in Argentina has to subsidize the rest of the country; the rich states of Bolivia subsidize the others etc.

The USA-haters apply the same “progressive taxation” and “revenue-sharing” logic to the international scene. Rich nations, like the USA became richer by plundering the wealth from other countries. “Equity” demands that USA stop pilfering resources from the poor countries. People who believe in this myth are the same people that, frustrated because they cannot personally get their slice back from the empire feel that justice has been served when somebody else can pilot an airplane, strike a high-rise and kill thousands of innocents.

The revenue sharing paradigm is complemented by the “give me, is my social right” attitude encouraged by the International Financial Institutions. Those institutions have indeed promoted a new servitude paradigm cloaking bare greed under solidarity and protection. For example the World Bank in a recent document expresses that: *“People need protection from the potentially ruinous costs of health care and loss of income due to illness. The costs rival losses of income from unemployment as a cause of poverty”*. People are treated like children that need to be *protected*. Of course the Bank does not make explicit who will bear the costs of protection.

The new “progressive” paradigm is the paradigm of social rights. Under “social rights”, your property is my property but not in the old fashion way. In its new modern transformation socialism does not care about socializing the “means of production” because through “progressive” taxation it socializes the revenues from those means of production. Under this new paradigm people are made believe that they are helpless victims that have the right to demand “protection”. Thus, they have a right to have someone else (or “the State”) pay for their health care, their education, their unemployment, their old age and even their bank balances if the bank of their choice fails. When applied to international relations the new socialist paradigm implies that the third world has the right to demand resources from the rich countries, in particular from the USA. If this does not happen in the degree which is deemed just then you are transformed into an USA-hater or an USA derider.

The mass media programs, including “unbiased” news reports, respond to the demand of the USA-haters and scorners and by doing it they become the feed for more USA-haters and scorners. For example, TVE, the official Spanish international TV channel reported that in Montevideo, “millions of persons have gone to the streets to protest the visit of President Bush” This is of course unbelievable in a country of only 3,5 million people. By responding to the demand of most of their audience, whose majority is light or hard USA-haters, the mass media influences many people who in principle are not in such cluster. Thus the circle is closed.

To summarize: the number of USA-haters *cum* deriders will continue to grow unless there is less ignorance, less envy and less greed. Consequently, it is necessary to finish with a skeptical note about this issue. Probably, once China becomes the new dominating “empire” many whose parents or grand-parents were USA-haters and scorners will look back with nostalgia to the times of the USA Empire.