



## **rRemarks Data for November 1st, 2022 Village Council Meeting**

**Agenda Section:** Comments of a General Nature

**Agenda Item:** Comments of a General Nature

**Commenter:** David Rose

**Comment:** Comment on Political Quandary

Tues Nov 8 is election day in the US.

Perhaps more so than in any prior election, in this one Americans face a quandary.

Polling shows that about 80% of the supporters of each of the nation's two major parties believe the other party is a danger to the country. Sadly, they're right.

Democrats for example seem hell bent on the US holding onto global political economic power by whatever means necessary, even though the nation is in economic decline. Not that most Republicans oppose the idea.

Republicans though seem hell bent on holding domestic political economic power by whatever means necessary, even as they become a shrinking demographic minority in the country.

Their fascist effort is nearing culmination thanks to several recent USSC decisions for which they have been striving. See Senator Sheldon Whitehouse's new book Scheme for details.

The USSC decision in Citizens United that "money is speech." is a modern day rendering of the principle that only men of property should have the right to vote. The impact of the decision is analogous to declaring slaves 3/5 of a person. Those who have more money are presumed to have a right to hold and exercise more power.

Whitehorse points out the USSC subsequently refused to hear a case (to which he and John McCain were bipartisan parties) that argued the court had failed when claiming in

Citizens United the transparency of donations would prevent problems in campaign funding and spending. Instead, we have seen an explosion of dark money funding that Whitehouse describes as the domestic equivalent of the psyops operations the CIA engages in around the world to encourage election results US leaders prefer.

The USSC gutted the voting rights act, a decision that opened the floodgates to all the voter suppression laws and voter intimidation efforts Republican dominated legislatures are passing.

Combine those decisions with the USSC ruling on the second amendment that energizes conservatives' perception of a need to defend themselves against Asians, blacks, Jews, communists, and Democrats, and it's no wonder talk and threats and actual enactments of violence are rising.

The USSC Dobbs decision overturning abortion rights goes far toward returning women to a social position of subordination and subjugation. That those on the political right complain mask mandates under covid are an infringement of freedom but demand abortions regardless of circumstance be deemed a crime makes a mockery of logical thinking.

And of course, let's not forget the travesty of USSC's decision in Bush v Gore back in 2000.

A major part of the problem we face as a nation is that language — the use of words — has lost all utility because words are used loosely, absent agreed-upon meaning, as the VM's adulteration exemplifies.

Take "steal the election" for example. When Democrats use the phrase, it means "too few people were able to vote." When Republicans use the phrase, it means "too many people were able to vote." Preventing too many people from voting has been a central objective in the Republicans' political playbook since Lee Atwater's time as a party operative back in the 1980s, the halcyon days of Ronald Reagan's presidency.

The phrase "voting for the lesser of two evils" has never been more applicable in an American election. Nor more worrisome and dangerous. With the country's two party winner-take-all system precluding any effective alternative from third parties, third party candidates are seen not as a source of innovation and rejuvenation but as nothing more than spoilers whom the major parties must keep off the ballot.

We've seen a takeover of the Republican Party by far right extremists, largely thanks to the fact globalized capitalism, even though dominated by the US and its multinational corporations, isn't lifting all American boats these days. Look no further than that for the structural basis of the divide between rural and urban America, between the people who think things are fine and those being left behind. Including here in IL. Urban and suburban Americans, especially the educated ones, have up till now been the principal beneficiaries of the globalization of exploitation inherent in capitalism.

But as I observed to this body months ago, Russia's Special Military Operation in Ukraine marks the beginning of the end of the post WWII pattern of international relations. The consequences for American politics and economics are enormous.

If you doubt my claim, read Putin's 30 Sep speech on the accession of the four regions formerly part of Ukraine who voted to join Russia and to his 30 Oct speech to Valdai Discussion Club of Moscow. And read Xi's speech to the recent Chinese Communist Party's Congress.

Most notable to me was that on 30 Sep Putin echoed economist Michael Hudson when he said:

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The West is ready to cross every line to preserve the neo-colonial system which allows it to live off the world, to plunder it thanks to the domination of the dollar and technology, to collect an actual tribute from humanity, to extract its primary source of unearned prosperity, the rent paid to the hegemon. The preservation of this annuity is their main, real and absolutely self-serving motivation. This is why total de-sovereignisation is in their interest. This explains their aggression towards independent states, traditional values and authentic cultures, their attempts to undermine international and integration processes, new global currencies and technological development centres they cannot control. It is critically important for them to force all countries to surrender their sovereignty to the United States.

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To see what entering a new era looks like for people living in rich nations, look at what is happening in Europe with the breakdown of economic relations between Europe and Russia.

Businesses in Europe are about to fail because the cost of operating has exploded. Why? For an obvious reason, because the energy Russia supplied to Europe is reduced/cut off thanks to EU governments boycotting Russian supplies to “punish” Russia for its resistance to NATO incursion .

And alternatives, including LNG from the US, are much more expensive.

In turn, energy prices in the US are rising accordingly. The Biden administration had hoped the Saudis and OPEC+ would raise oil production as it had requested; instead it lowered production, if only slightly, but the message was clear. From the Democrats’ perspective, only NOT raising production is seen as “interfering in our election.” The Saudis aptly snarky counterpunch? That the Administration’s ongoing drawdown of the SPR interferes with oil market functioning.

When you don’t have energy slaves (aka machines) to do work, you discover very quickly your sense of how rich and special you are changes quite rapidly.

But businesses are about to fail for another reason. The Fed Reserve now leads other central banks in a major policy reversal, raising interest rates in order to combat the “bad” inflation of rising prices of the goods and services. This reversal comes after decades of lowering interest rates, to promote ‘good inflation’ (in the form of the rising price of assets), behaving in the process as if ‘bad inflation’ had been banished forever.

The chickens from years of malinvestment thanks to near zero interest rates are now coming home to roost. Look no further than the chaos in the UK for a handy example. Why is this happening? As financial advisor John Hussman explains: matching duration of assets with duration of liabilities makes good investing sense, with one key caveat — unless an investor ignores the purchase price of those assets.

The math of ignoring that caveat is devastating: in the UK, some government bonds whose yield rose to just over 4% dropped 77% in price from their high! The US Federal Reserve faces the same predicament; its assets are now worth less than the amount spent to acquire them, and the interest income the assets generate is insufficient to cover the interest the Fed pays out to banks for the reserves it holds.

Thus, Hussman observes that like the BoE the Fed Reserve is insolvent. But invoking Charles Ponzi, he notes “they {the people} don’t care if you’re insolvent if they don’t see you’re insolvent.”

The rise in interest rates is feeding inflation in no small part because everybody who took on debt when debt was ‘cheap’ now struggles to roll over that debt as rates rise. Those in a position to do so pass along the higher costs of their debt to those they can exploit. Those who can’t go out of business. The exploited are forced to tighten their belts even more. Some percentage resort to crime.

The more constructive response would be to protest, as people are doing in such cities across Europe. Does American media report that story? According to reporting by Eve Ottenberg on Counterpunch, the answer is “no.”

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2022/10/28/the-military-industrial-media-complex-strikes-again/>

Instead we get reports reinforcing the line the US and NATO will “support Ukraine for however long it takes” to overthrow Putin. Because by definition the ruling classes of the US and other rich nations are the “good oligarchs” who deserve everyone’s support to lead the world.

Disguising the effect of this exploitation is the insidious political economic notion that the FIRE (finance, insurance, real estate) sector of the economy adds to rather than subtracts from GDP. What else would you expect capitalist apologists to claim when financialization is the way elite capitalists — the “good oligarchs” — wage class warfare within the world’s rich nations and against the people in the poor nations, the euphemistically mis-named “developing nations.”

But, when the good oligarchs and their minions use resources at an unsustainable rate, increasing political economic inequality in the process, the exploited at some point are going to resist. This global system of pillaging is the system Russia and China are now vowing to change.

By the way, financialization of GDP is the precise reason we can see a rising GDP without a proportionate increase in the number of people working. Which might explain

why the Democratic Party's citation of increasing GDP in its 2022 campaigning need not translate into ballot support from working class voters.

All of which means, as I have said to VC before: given these extremely turbulent and uncertain times, if the funds VC and DG58 seek for the new village hall project and grade schools renovation project become available, it is only because the residents of DG are positioned to be more exploiters than exploited.

But make no mistake. The race is on; the question is: will the ultimate Ponzi scheme prevent these projects from completing/happening in the first place/being paid off?

What is the ultimate Ponzi scheme? The blissfully ignorant tapping of non-renewable resources to sustain the rich nations' way of living as if those resources are infinite, and the equally blissfully ignorant unsustainable rate of consumption of renewable resources, thanks to amplification of work made possible by the non-renewable resources known as fossil fuels, the "food" of energy-slaves.

Neither major political party in the US is prepared to face the reality that our so-called American way of life is NOT environmentally sustainable. Thus neither major party is trying to move the nation in the direction of living environmentally sustainably.

This failure is the underlying cause of all the specific problems enumerated above.

Given the failure at the national level to take the goal seriously, should we be surprised DG's VC avoids its purported goal of environmental sustainability like the plague? That VC follows instead the sophomoric notion of environmental sustainability the VM conjured up, a notion that has little impact on VC's way of operating?

Does the VC have the political courage to arouse the ECC from dormancy and use it to help make environmental sustainability a real goal of DG's way of living? Not merely 'friendly,' but actually sustainable? Sustainability is indeed a much heavier lift; but it's also unavoidable.

As the past many years of VC inaction reveal, there's not a snowball's chance in hell VC does anything until the people of DG demand it.

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Topics for discussion.

I found the summary below on the internet; it's a decent starting point for discussing the subject of alternate energy futures. It captures the basic tenets of the three prevailing perspectives of which I am aware.

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Background

- We are addicted to high energy use.
- Each first world citizen has the equivalent of scores of energy slaves.
- We spend colossal amounts of energy on useless things.
- Governments and especially militaries are fabulous energy wasters.
- People and even experts don't understand energy.

The Green Narrative

- Radical action is required to move to renewable, sustainable energy sources to save the environment from climate change. We need to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 by shifting to renewable energy sources like hydro, solar, wind, tidal and geothermal. Electric cars are our future.
- Hydrogen can be a green energy source when it is produced from green electricity sources. Nuclear and fusion power are also carbon free and possibly parts of a green energy future. Improving technologies will help solve our energy problems.
- We need massive investments in green energy. Financial instruments like subsidies, carbon credits and green energy bonds will help us move to a renewable energy future. The world will be better off without fossil fuels.

- The price of green energy has dropped and is now competitive with fossil fuel energy. Switching to renewables will save most people money. Moving to clean energy will create millions of good paying jobs.
- By moving to green energy we have a bright future awaiting us.

### The Abundance Narrative

- There is plenty of energy but its availability is blocked by those who use energy scarcity to enhance their own power. The real cause of energy insecurity is under-investment in oil and gas. Climate policy is being used as an excuse to limit energy.
- Energy Cost of Energy is a myth rolled out when energy production is blocked. There are at least 47 years of oil in known reserves in the world and that doesn't include the trillions of barrels of recoverable shale oil in the US alone. Oil was and is continuously produced by abiotic means in the earth. We will never run out of oil.
- We need to harness all possible sources of energy including oil, gas, hydro, wind, solar, thermal and tidal energy. Nuclear and fusion power are important parts of our energy solution.
- Technology will help solve our energy problems. "Clean" energy sources abound within humanity's grasp. By 2100, we will have quantum reactors creating zero-point energy, air-wired to your car with TeraGigaHertz transmission, and matter synthesizers as well.
- By using all available sources of energy we have a bright future awaiting us.

### The Going, Going, Gone Narrative

- The easily extractable energy is mostly gone. Sane energy policies in the 60's or 70's could have mitigated the problems but not much can be done now. New technologies almost always end up using more energy than they produce.
- Green energy is a mirage. All so-called green energy solutions require fossil fuels as precursors and are not sustainable long term. We don't have enough lithium, cobalt, etc.



for car batteries and our electric grid won't support charging everyone's electric cars. People may say they want green energy but are unwilling to significantly sacrifice for it.

– Infinite growth in a finite world is not possible. We are nearing an energy cliff where there will be drastically less energy available and which will cause an economic depression that never ends. Energy scarcity will be used by those in charge to enhance their own power. We will eventually return to only having local energy from the sun at our disposal, that is, about 1% of the energy we use now. Everything will be mostly local.

– Our future is not bright. Prepare now.

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And then there's the question I've asked the VC before, among the many I have asked that it refuses to answer:

Is capitalism compatible with environmental sustainability?

Another way of asking the question:

Can the world's nations' peoples adopt a systems perspective to our current problems of lack of both financial and environmental sustainability? And deal with these challenges without killing each other and potentially annihilating the species?

Ignoring these questions is simply another manifestation of the point mentioned above: On the hierarchy of exploitation, residents of DG tend to be more exploiters than exploited. So why should they worry ... until the time comes?