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Consolidated Energy: Hillary Clinton and the 2016 U.S. Presidential Campaign

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Abstract: The one on a one-dollar bill signifies a quantitative measure of that one's symbolic energy – what we would normally call its value. In the absence of energy, life cannot form. Just as nature abhors a vacuum, we learn to abhor a debt. This understanding of value and debt informs the larger framework of analysis used to examine the seemingly never ending U.S. Presidential campaign of 2016. While many argue that Hillary Clinton represented the maintenance of the status quo, this paper points to evidence supporting a different conclusion. In the first place, to what status quo could they be referring? Second of all, as I argue here, a Clinton presidency would have signaled a coup of sorts. As WikiLeaks summarized it: “There is no election. There is power consolidation.” With the U.S. executive brought into the consolidation of and around energy, what has become the status quo in Syria would have intensified and WWII would have been unavoidable.

Key words: value, debt, energy, economy of energy flows, Hillary Clinton, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, TPP, JASTA, 9/11, Slavoj Žižek, Syria, WikiLeaks, Julian Assange.

The thesis I want to defend in this article maintains that we need to consider “value” and “debt” as situated within an economy of energy flows, understanding “energy” in the scientific sense as a property capable of “being transferred from one object to another or converted from one form into another.”¹ Contingent on the presence of energy or its degree of availability, we more commonly find it defined as the “ability of a system to perform work.”² As a signified (concept, mental image), “value” holds out promise of a receipt of energy, while “debt” implies a lack and demands an expenditure of energy against it. Debt, then, triggers a search for value where we hope to find and receive energy to pay the debt. The energy expended to secure energy can lead either to the recurrence of debt or to a surplus of energy to be drawn from over the course of ensuing expenditures. To discover what we value most, we might well ask ourselves where we expend the greatest energy.

For as much energy as I expended following the 2016 U.S. Presidential election, including both the Democratic and Republican primaries, I could reasonably ask myself what “debt” was I trying to settle? To whom did I owe what that led me to do that? The simplest answer points to my collectivist sense of *civitas* or moral imperative to uphold my responsibilities to my contemporaries and future generations (the collective other) in the collective governance of society to preserve or enhance the common good. I am aware of the limitations of representative democracy in allowing for collective governance.³ Within a representative democracy, citizens expend energy to cast votes representing a symbolic transfer of energy to the candidate whose assessment of the current state of the common good and whose plans for preserving or enhancing the common good represent our own views and wishes. The candidate receiving the most votes receives the most symbolic energy, giving that person a mandate to use that energy to perform the work necessary to serve the common good in keeping with their campaign platform. If they didn’t represent themselves truly in the campaign, they won’t truly represent their voters in office.

In both the Democratic and Republican primaries, one candidate clearly attracted far more energy than their opponents. On the Republican side, it appeared that Donald Trump used his money and his celebrity to steamroll the other candidates. It turned out, however, that other forces came into play to “elevate” Trump to his victory.⁴ On the Democratic side, Bernie Sanders delivered a message that resonated with and drew energy from a very young, very diverse, and very large population. In the end, perhaps it was the diversity factor that contributed most to the size of Sanders’ popular support (explaining why Sanders outpolled Trump by 10 or more points in nearly every national poll)⁵ and the youth that contributed most to its energy.

As reported by HA Goodman⁶, Hillary Clinton, the other Democratic candidate, was either losing to Trump, tied with him, or just slightly ahead of him. She never attracted the size of crowds that either Trump or Sanders attracted. She didn't seem to try, opting for private fund raisers to fuel her campaign with a different form of symbolic energy – money. At times, her definition of the common good seemed to fit precisely the status quo being challenged by both Sanders and Trump. It is precisely this economy of energy flows represented by Hillary Clinton, that we need to understand to grasp how she “won” the primary election, how she lost the general election, and why she should but won't be indicted for a litany of crimes related to the emails published by WikiLeaks, the Clinton Foundation and why she chose to use a private email server during her time as Secretary of State.

The Problem of the Common Good

Slavoj Žižek opens his *Demanding the Impossible*⁷ by questioning the utility of the common good. What does it signify? Though Žižek doesn't problematize the notion of “common,” I believe we must decide how inclusive we want to be in defining the “we.” Where do we draw the lines around the “us” that determine what we hold as common? The lines that define us as an “us” as opposed to some “other” that is “not us” or not common to “us.” Do we draw them around “our” family units? “Our” city limits? “Our” county lines? “Our” state lines? “Our” national borders? “Our” species? “Our” biosphere? “Our” planet? “Our” solar system? “Our” galaxy? “Our” Universe? “Our” everything?

“Our,” we must acknowledge, functions as a possessive pronoun. It frames everything contained within the borders of each level on our sliding scale of commonality as our possession, as if it all belonged to us, as if we owned it all, as if we owned the sum total of energy flows within the economy of the “we,” however we define our totality. While we should recognize this as part of a highly problematic anthropocentrism (human-centeredness) that situates *homo sapiens* as a sovereign species with some right to dominion, we can't deny the necessity of taking possession of energy. Again, where we find energy, we find value. Where we find value, we direct and expend our own energy. Value guides the energies of desire for energy. Sliding down the nanoscale, we can't ignore the economies of energy flows within us at the atomic and subatomic levels that form the specific cells of discrete organs, which along with cells of our respiratory and circulatory systems, constitute a metabolism (economy of energy flows) that transfers energy to the central nervous system, brain, and senses that create the conditions for the economy of energy flows in the Lacanian unconscious. But every economy of energy/value within us that forms

us and sustains us depends on energy from some larger economy of energy/value flows containing us. To define the commons, then, requires us to flip the terms of possession. We should decide the commons not in terms of which economies of energy flows belong to us, but in terms of the economies of energy flows to which we belong.

Žižek speaks in similar terms about the notion of “good” that decides the “common good.” “For me,” he says, ‘what is problematic is not the word ‘common’ but the word ‘good.’

Because the way I see it, from my European perspective, traditional aesthetics was directed toward some *supreme* Good. It could be God, humanity, the universe, etc. : we see this *common good* as a supreme substantial value that we should all have to work for. But for me, modernity begins with Descartes, and then with Kant - to be precise, with an ethics that is no longer an ethics of the common good. For example, in Kant, you find it is purely formal ethics: ethics of the moral law and so on. Here, ethics cannot be, in any way, politicized: politicized in the sense that you cannot simply presuppose some common good.

What is a common good today? OK, let’s say ecology. Probably most people would agree, even though we are politically different, that we all care about the earth. But if you look closely, you will see that there are so many ecologies on which you have to make so many decisions. Having said that, my position here is very crazy. For me, politics has priority over ethics. Not in the vulgar sense that we can do whatever we want - even kill people and then subordinate ethics to politics - but in a much more radical sense that what we define as our good is not something we just discover; rather, it is that we have to take responsibility for defining what is our good.⁸

Viewing the common good as a decision for which we should hold ourselves collectively and, therefore, individually responsible adds new meaning to the idea of *civitas*. It also delivers a much broader understanding of democracy and what it means for all of us to be self-governed and collectively-governed.

As Friedrich Nietzsche wrote in *The Genealogy of Morals*, “We don’t know ourselves, we knowledgeable people—we are personally ignorant about ourselves. And there’s good reason for that. We’ve never tried to find out who we are.”⁹ To this, I would add that we’ve never tried to find out *what* we are. We know we are *homo sapiens*. We know we are primates, mammals, vertebrates, all the way down to eukaryotes and beyond into the atomic and subatomic

worlds within us. However, along with prokaryotes, we're just life forms made possible by the goldilocks conditions for life on this planet. If the question of "who we are" is tied to the Lacanian imaginary, the "what we are" must be tied to the symbolic. As Žižek pointed to in the quote above, "traditional aesthetics was directed toward some *supreme* Good. It could be God, humanity, the universe..."¹⁰ This points to the importance that cosmology and creation stories play in traditional societies; they help people situate themselves and their stories (individual and collective) in the broader story of the universe. Through these stories, human beings create and recreate the symbolic universe that structures the patterns and regularities that we might refer to as their "way of life," suggesting that life must need some "way" that allows for life or that allows us to live. This presupposes ways of living that would not allow for life, which begs the question: What allows for life at its most primordial level?

To answer this question, we should hold the idea of economy as central. What is an economy, after all, if not a system for organizing or orchestrating the acquisition, consumption, expenditure, and distribution of energy/value? For simplicity's sake, I have adopted "economy of energy flows" to refer to each of the levels of the commons as well as the commons as a whole. That includes the patterns of energy flows we recognize in human social economies as well as those we are able to see in ecological economies (those within the biosphere and those beyond it in the cosmos of which the biosphere is a part), which might be fatally redundant. Nevertheless, I draw this distinction because of the importance of acknowledging the limitations inherent within social economies of energy flows, by virtue of their being human in origin. Just as Žižek claims that we must take responsibility for defining the common good, we also bear responsibility for deciding our social economy of energy flows (way of life) and its consequences for the natural economy of energy flows upon which it depends. Do these responsibilities not lie at the heart of *civitas* and collective self-governance?

The Economy of (Dark) Energy Flows in the Media: Expenditure and Distribution

Much of the above hinges on how purposefully and effectively we, as the collective embodiment of *civitas*, ensure that our social economy expends energy to generate quality information (*qua* energy/value) regarding the state of our common good. How clean is the water we drink to hydrate our bodies? How clean is the air we breath into our respiratory system that delivers oxygen to our blood where it is distributed to all of our vital organs, tissue, and and bones, including the brain from which the consciousness flows that

allows us to generate this information? Are there any among us in need? What new information, ideas, and creations have scientists, scholars, artists, and craftspeople (technologists) generated to share with us? How much energy do we expend distributing that information to the collective? How much energy does the collective expend receiving it, processing it, individually in reflection and collectively in conversation (aural and/or electronic), and possibly acting on it to make changes of one kind or another? How effectively does our social economy of energy flows promote collective learning?

At the present time, our established patterns of collective learning in the United States and throughout most of the world fail to serve any meaningful *civitas*, and they never have. They have almost exclusively served commercial interests. Schools were designed to feed the factories (now the prison-industrial complex) and the military with docile but useful human fodder, like the coppertops portrayed in *The Matrix*⁷. Print journalism once functioned organically, but media mergers have reduced newspapers to reports from the 1% on what they want you to think, know, and care about. Radio followed a similar path, and is now virtually dead. The purpose of television was tied to the “selling of soap” and otherwise appeasing advertisers (other corporations) from its inception. Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky helped us understand who the media works for, and what they’re selling.¹² Namely, they are selling an audience to other corporations. Of course, the programming sells that which will most readily attract us, and so appeals to some of our most primal instincts. In terms of quality of information of relevance to the common good, we have to judge it as poor while we lament the fact that questions of honesty would ever arise in a consciously designed and technically engineered economy of energy flows created for the purpose of collective learning. While the internet has given birth to a new generation of citizen-journalists, much of it panders to the marketing imperative of capital as well. So, even when we’re watching H.A. Goodman or Amy Goodman, we still have to deal with pop-up ads for Viagra and online dating.

Observing the mainstream media’s (MSM’s) reportage of the 2016 U.S. Presidential election, I think we need to acknowledge them for accomplishing something we would never think possible. However, we could just as easily accuse them of plagiarism. Ironically, it wasn’t exactly according to the script they had written for them. According to the script they were handed, the star of the play was a feminist heroine destined from birth (former first lady, Senator, and Secretary of State) to become the first female President in U.S. history. But first she would have to defeat the villainous misogynist, racist, Islamophobic patriarch, played by Donald J. Trump. For months before the Republican National Convention, the media and liberal websites had been portraying Trump

as the greatest menace to the world since Adolf Hitler. And Trump, to his credit, embarrassed members of the Republican establishment, including many of the Tea Party Republicans, by demonstrating that he knew how to whip up enthusiasm from their electoral base better than they did. Trump, the showman, shared the stage with no one. One by one, most of the other GOP candidates dropped out of the race even before the convention. They could not withstand his caustic assaults. Trump dominated with an acerbic style that “dog-whistled” (intentionally or not) to racist and Islamophobic groups, confirming everything the mainstream media (excluding FoxNews, of course) had told Democratic voters to believe about him.

Not everything played out according to the script, but the mainstream media worked hard to suppress or deny anything that would dispel the illusion they were selling to the American public. That’s why, when I look at the throngs of people protesting the outcome of the election, I am angered by the MSM and, by default, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) for having sold them on it. I understand that many of those protesting are doing so out of either genuine concern for the racial and religious minorities in this country, or because they are members of those communities and they are frightened. Judging from the number of racially and religiously motivated attacks inflicted on them in the five days since the election, we know those fears are valid. But there are other protesters, particularly those who are being paid by George Soros via [MoveOn.org](#) and led by celebrity provocateur Michael Moore, who want to shred the U.S. Constitution just to see their heroine coronated. How quickly they forget their own outrage when George W. Bush called the Constitution “just a goddamned piece of paper.”¹³ They want the fantasy that was sold to them, promised to them to be fulfilled. They are fighting for their illusions, including but not limited to their illusions about Hillary Clinton, the illusions sold to them by that same MSM through the script handed to them by the DNC/the Clinton campaign.

On July 22d, 2016, WikiLeaks published an archive of emails from the DNC server. These emails revealed massive levels of collusion between the MSM and the DNC/the Clinton campaign. Not only did they collude to undermine Bernie Sanders in his bid for the Democratic nomination, they purposely “elevated” Trump to serve as Clinton’s preferred challenger, thinking she could defeat him more readily than any of the other Republican candidates. Eventually, DNC Chair, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, had to resign, though she was immediately (re)hired by the Clinton campaign. Donna Brazille had to resign because leaked emails showed that she had passed two questions to Clinton prior to her primary debates with Bernie Sanders. When these and other WikiLeaks emails from the servers of the DNC and DNC Chair, John Podesta, began hurting Clinton in the polls, she, like the good Cold Warrior she was as a Goldwater girl in 1964, had her

campaign manager, Robby Mook, go on CNN to tell the world that the Russians had hacked the DNC server. Though the claim was thoroughly debunked, CNN and the rest of the MSM ran with the story to shift public energy away from the actual contents of those emails.

Many of my liberal and progressive friends and I have been guilty of having a really arrogant attitude toward the Republican base, referring to them as “low-information voters.” Michael Moore is right, then, to say that Trump’s election has been the greatest “Fuck You” to the political establishment in U.S. history.¹⁴ Some would call me and my friends “politics junkies,” but for all of our smarts, I don’t think we’ve recognized that there are just as many “low-information voters” among Democrats. Again, given the poor job we do of collective learning, none of it should shock us. Furthermore, most of the protesters probably haven’t read the Constitution to know it contains the laws governing our federal elections. The electoral college was established in 1789, when the Constitution was adopted to replace the Articles of Confederation. If they want to amend the Constitution to eliminate the electoral college before the next Presidential election in 2020, I would support them. But some of them are demanding that the rules of the game be changed after the contest is now over. All of us, including Madame Secretary, knew the rules before the game started. The number of electoral college votes literally trumps the the number of popular votes.

But how quick they are to forget, again, their own outrage, encouraged by the MSM and the political establishment, when, prior to the election, Trump said that he would have to examine the results of the election before he would concede defeat. How would they have responded to anti-Clinton protests had Trump told his supporters that the elections were rigged, or wanted the rules changed? Clinton, in typical Clinton style (see Libya and Syria) is now working through Soros-funded proxies to overturn the results of the election after she’s already conceded. Since she hasn’t come out against these calls to overturn the election results, we can only assume she is party to them in some fashion.

The MSM, along with the Clinton Campaign and the DNC, created the conditions resulting in these protests. Žižek, in *The Most Sublime Hysteric*,¹⁵ recounts the story of Kaspar Hauser, a young man who showed up in Nuremberg in 1828 after spending nearly all of his life in a dark cellar with virtually no contact with the outside world, only a man in in black who looked after feeding him. Before he’d ever arrived, however, as Žižek writes:

toward the end of the eighteenth century the theme of the child living outside of human society had become the subject of an ever increasing number of literary and scientific works, as the pure

embodiment of the distinction between the “nature” and “culture” of man.

Kaspar’s emergence was, from a “material” point of view, the result of a series of unexpected accidents. But from the formal point of view, it was fundamentally necessary; the structure of contemporary knowledge had prepared a space for him.¹⁶

From the same “formal point of view,” through their demonization of Trump and their portrayal of Clinton as the inevitable (“polls” taken just days before the election declared her to have a 92-95% chance of winning) first female President of the United States, the MSM created the space for these protests.

So, I’m not denouncing the protesters. I view most of them as passionate people out to show the world that America is better than the image of it portrayed in both the characterizations of Trump as well as some of his own actions as well as those of a small minority of his supporters spotlighted by the MSM. I also see them as victims of a seriously flawed system of collective learning. If the only source of information they expended energy on was, for convenience sake, the MSM, then their knowledge of the candidates must have conformed roughly to comedian Seth Meyers’ comparison of what we know about Clinton and Trump. He began with Clinton, asking: “Do you pick someone who’s under federal investigation for using a private email server? Or,” moving to Trump, do you pick someone who:

- called Mexicans rapists,
- claimed the president was born in Kenya,
- proposed banning an entire religion from entering the US,
- mocked a disabled reporter,
- said John McCain wasn’t a war hero because he was captured,
- attacked the parents of a fallen soldier,
- bragged about committing sexual assault,
- was accused by 12 women of committing sexual assault,
- said some of those women weren’t attractive for him to sexually assault,
- said more countries should get nukes,
- said that he would force the military to commit war crimes,
- said a judge was biased because his parents were Mexicans,
- said women should be punished for having abortions,
- incited violence at his rallies,
- called global warming a hoax perpetrated by the Chinese,
- called for his opponent to be jailed,
- declared bankruptcy six times,

- bragged about not paying income taxes,
- stiffed his contractors and employees,
- lost a billion dollars in one year,
- scammed customers at his fake university,
- bought a six-foot-tall painting of himself with money from his fake foundation,
- has a trial for fraud coming up in November,
- insulted an opponent's looks,
- insulted an opponent's wife's looks,
- and bragged about grabbing women by the pussy?¹⁷

All of this points back to our flawed system of collective learning, which includes more than just the MSM. It critically compromises the value – qualitatively and quantitatively – of the information that most people have time to easily access. And our schools do little to convince young people of the debt we owe each other to expend significant energy optimizing their participation in our political institutions that give us at least some degree of collective self-governance.

The Server

Had the MSM done an honest job of reporting on the WikiLeaks emails instead of taking orders from the DNC/the Clinton campaign, or if the protesters had read those emails themselves, there might be no protesters. Even those voting for Clinton only as the “lesser of two evils” might question their judgement on which evil was actually greater. Whereas Seth Meyers gave his viewers no idea about why the FBI might be investigating Clinton's private email server, nor why she thought she needed one, it's not difficult, given the information released by WikiLeaks, to understand why.

Not only did the private email server allow Clinton to have her own domain name (clintonemail.com) instead of the State Department's domain name (state.gov), it allowed her to send emails to other individuals' non-governmental email accounts without fear of those emails ever being made public under the Freedom of Information Act. Or so she thought. A March 11, 2015 article in *Fortune Magazine* also reveal for us that during the first three months that it was online, Clinton's server was left totally unencrypted, meaning unprotected.¹⁸ Wikileaks would later post emails describing how at least 5 foreign governments had hacked her server during that time, something they wouldn't have been able to do, at least not as easily, had she complied with the law and kept her emails on a secure government server. Complicating matters further for Clinton, *Politico*

reported in January of 2016 that

Intelligence Community Inspector General I. Charles McCullough III told both the Senate Intelligence and Senate Foreign Relations committees that intelligence agencies found messages relating to what are known as “special access programs,” or SAP. That’s an even more restricted subcategory of sensitive compartmented information, or SCI, which is top secret national security information derived from sensitive intelligence sources.¹⁹

We also know, from a February 1, 2016 New York Post article that some of those emails contained “the names of CIA officers serving overseas and foreigners who are on the spy agency’s payroll — potentially endangering their lives.”²⁰

“It’s a death sentence,” a senior intelligence-community official told the Observer. “If we’re lucky, only [foreign] agents, not our officers, will get killed because of this.”

The paper said the intelligence community is in panic mode trying to determine which agents may have been compromised.²¹

Deroy Murdock, of *The National Review*, reported more fully on what devastation Clinton’s hubris had created for the intelligence community. According to one of Murdock’s anonymous sources:

To me, it’s offensive,” the former spook tells me. “If it were really SAP, Clinton was undoing all the hard work that my friends were doing. This is oftentimes intensive, painstaking, costly work, and her carelessness has now undone it. That pisses me off.

Imagine that you work at Pepsi, your 401K is tied to the performance of the company, and that performance is inextricably linked to the secret ingredient for Pepsi,” this intelligence specialist explains. “How would you feel if one of your superiors were just casual with that most sensitive of information? I think it would upset you. Now, for intel, multiply that by at least ten. We can have arguments over whether confidential material is unnecessarily classified; we generally don’t in mishandling cases, but I’d potentially be open to it. But with SAP, no way. This is so grossly negligent that either it is false or Hillary Clinton doesn’t care.”²²

This should have tipped us off as to the source of at least some of the leaks

being published by WikiLeaks, despite her protestations that it was Vladimir Putin and the Russians.²³ No surprise then, in response to Clinton's accusations against Russia, that Wikileaks co-founder Julian Assange would say that "Perhaps one day the source or sources will step forward and that might be an interesting moment. Some people may have egg on their faces."²⁴

Consolidation or Coup?

Hillary Clinton may be many things, but stupid is clearly not one of them. She may be careless, but not in a mindless way. She literally, as suggested by Murdock's anonymous source quoted above, "does not care." During her debates with Bernie Sanders for the Democratic Party nomination, the Senator from Vermont repeatedly challenged her to release the transcripts of speeches she had made to banks and international investment firms. "According to public records, Clinton gave 92 speeches between 2013 and 2015. Her standard fee is \$225,000, and she collected \$21.6 million dollars in just under two years. Clinton made 8 speeches to big banks, netting \$1.8 million, according to a CNN analysis."²⁵ Though she refused to release those transcripts (again, she's not stupid) someone did send them to WikiLeaks, and they went public just one month prior to the November 8th election. Already suffering from a deep public distrust of her honesty, the most damaging elements in those speeches appeared in one she delivered to a housing trade group in 2013:

I'm Kind Of Far Removed" From The Struggles Of The Middle Class
"Because The Life I've Lived And The Economic, You Know, Fortunes
That My Husband And I Now Enjoy.

But If Everybody's Watching, You Know, All Of The Back
Room Discussions And The Deals, You Know, Then People Get A
Little Nervous, To Say The Least. So, You Need Both A Public And A
Private Position.²⁶

In many ways, Hillary Clinton epitomizes or personifies all of the greatest psychopathic tendencies so well described in Joel Bakan's analysis of *The Corporation*.²⁷ The subtitle of Bakan's book and film – *The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power* – merits special attention for its precision in capturing the essence of the author's thesis. I will reach my thesis concerning how profit and power relate to value and debt later in the paper, but first I would like to address the symptoms of the capitalist pathology identified by Bakan and personified by Madame Secretary. Simon Caulkin summarizes them nicely in his review of *The Corporation* for *The Guardian*: "If you did a psychological profile of the

corporation, what would it look like? Self-interested, manipulative, avowedly asocial, self-aggrandising, unable to accept responsibility for its own actions or feel remorse - as a person, the corporation would probably qualify as a full-blown psychopath.”

At one level, Clinton personifies the corporation that she, her husband, their allies and network of accomplices have created through the workings of the Clinton Foundation. One of the most interesting tweets made by Wikileaks, as a sort of summation of the leaks provided to them by the FBI, NSA, and other sources (not the Russians), came on October 20, 2016. They wrote: “There is no US election. There is power consolidation. Rigged primary, rigged media and rigged ‘pied piper’ candidate drive consolidation.”²⁸ At another level, the corporation personified by Clinton represents, a totally new kind of corporation, one that seeks to function as a global state on behalf of the various players or entities who have bought into or invested symbolic energy (money) in the success of the agenda/s of those players as individual entities and as a consolidated firm that we need to understand as an economy of energy flows.

Tracking Hillary Clinton’s role in facilitating this consolidation could take us back to her years as a “Goldwater Girl,” and it warrants mentioning that Prescott Bush and his son, George H. W. Bush, also supported Goldwater in his 1964 Presidential campaign. Goldwater, of course, opposed the civil rights movement, sought to undo Roosevelt’s New Deal legislation and programs, and displayed deeply militarist views on the Soviet Union, arguing “that the United States could not consider (nuclear) war ‘unthinkable’ because that would give the Soviet Union an immense advantage. It was necessary for the United States to oppose Communism by achieving military superiority, by withdrawing diplomatic recognition, and “we should encourage the captive people to revolt against their Communist rulers.”²⁹ While this might help us understand Clinton’s antipathy toward Putin and the Russians, her identification with Goldwater best helps us understand why she was the ideal figure to consolidate neoconservatism’s imperial militarism and neoliberalism’s psychopathic disregard for the public, the collective or common good of all within the biosphere. Like a dual-fused bomb, or a twin-engined cruise missile, a Clinton Presidency, left unaborted through a failure or refusal to indict and prosecute, will achieve a remarkable consolidation of state (including military and police) and corporate powers. Are these two sets of forces the driving engines behind what has been characterized by Steve Pieczenik as a coup?³⁰

If we wanted to be totally cynical, in light of which powers were consolidating around Hillary Clinton to ensure her bringing the executive branch of the United States government under their control, we might scoff at Pieczenik’s description of this consolidation as a coup. After all, the modern

nation state signifies the historic merger of state and corporate power, mediated and resisted by the larger part of the population either through what limited democratic means they were allowed or through public protest movements. Many of those consolidating around Clinton and her husband have long viewed the state as an instrument of corporate power, their own private power. And the Clinton's have always demonstrated an eagerness to be willing, effective, and loyal partners in helping them make it reality. Nevertheless, Pieczenik has a point, even if he's not the spokesperson of a counter-coup directed by people from within sectors of the US intelligence community as he claims. A Clinton Presidency would have achieved a critical strategic objective in this consolidation of power. We should not, however, mistake this for its final objective. Short of being confronted, fully prosecuted, and duly punished for its litany of crimes, the consolidation of power will continue unabated.

Consolidating Around Energy in the Middle East

As Secretary of State, Clinton helped facilitate the coup in Libya and the subsequent transfer of weapons to Daesh (ISIS) and related terror groups in Syria who function as the proxy armies that enforce what passes today as US policy. At present and for multiple years, those proxies have played a crucial role in achieving a number of major objectives, including the destabilization and demand for the removal of the Assad government in Syria, as well as Qaddafi in Libya. The question becomes who identified those actions as "objectives" and when.

In no way should we mistake Clinton as being "the person" behind the Syrian policy, or even the Libyan policy. The funding, along with other means of support and development, for the holy proxy war by Islamic extremists currently focusing on Syria finds many sources, though these are not easy to track. They include "black accounts," often funded through actions deemed as illicit (see these articles on the CIA/FBI/US involvement in drug trafficking in Afghanistan³¹ and Mexico³²). There have also been instances when billions and even trillions of dollars have simply "disappeared" from certain US agencies and offices. On September 10, 2001 - one day before 9/11, for example, Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, revealed that "According to some estimates we cannot track \$2.3 trillion in transactions."³³ More recently, the Washington Post reported that the US State Department, under Hillary Clinton, "lost track" of \$60 billion in contracts.³⁴ Furthermore and most importantly, when asked which of the emails published by WikiLeaks he believed to be most significant, Julian Assange pointed to one in which Clinton revealed that, while both Qatar and Saudi Arabia had made hefty contributions to the Clinton Foundation and

received huge weapons deals from the U.S. State Department, she knew that both countries provide funding and other means of support to ISIS.

John Pilger: The Saudis, the Qataris, the Moroccans, the Bahrainis, particularly the first two, are giving all this money to the Clinton Foundation, while Hillary Clinton is secretary of state, and the State Department is approving massive arms sales, particularly Saudi Arabia.

Julian Assange: Under Hillary Clinton - and the Clinton emails reveal a significant discussion of it - the biggest-ever arms deal in the world was made with Saudi Arabia: more than \$80 billion. During her tenure, the total arms exports from the US doubled in dollar value.

JP: Of course, the consequence of that is that this notorious jihadist group, called ISIL or ISIS, is created largely with money from people who are giving money to the Clinton Foundation?

JA: Yes.

The major policy objective behind using black accounts, of course, entails effecting the desired results without being visible or associated with the actions producing those results. This amounts to nothing short of public deception on a grand scale. The actual motivations for those actions cannot be spoken in public. The architects of the policies and their implementation must, and do, see to that through their corruption of “journalism” and their private ownership of its means of creation and distribution (media). Support for the terrorist proxies comes frequently in the form of weapons, training, and combat support vehicles. Sometimes, it even includes direct military “assistance,” which begs the question of “who is really ‘assisting’ whom?” It even includes, in the case of Saudi and other Arab states, ideological training aimed at fermenting discord within targeted areas of the region and the globe through the promotion of Wahhabism, an extreme fundamentalist brand of Sunni Islam common among groups such as Daesh/ISIS.

What Clinton and the other architects of these policies didn’t anticipate has been the strong resistance of Putin’s Russia against the efforts of Daesh/ISIS, al-Qaeda, al Nusra, and others posing for the cameras as “moderate rebels” who share the same expressed goal (strategic “objective”) of their paymasters - “liberating” Syria from Syria. Already unnerved by the aggressive expansion of NATO and the US-inspired and supported coup in Ukraine, overseen primarily by Victoria Nuland in her role as Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Putin has directed massive Russian firepower against ISIS and

other proxy groups working for the CIA and other state actors to destabilize and remove the Assad regime. Shortly after the Ukrainian coup, US President Barack Obama “spoke openly about the need for Europe to reduce its reliance on Russian gas” and thereby reduce Russian influence among EU nations. One very strong, though seldom mentioned, motivation for the quest to remove Assad stems from his rejection of a proposed (2009) gas pipeline leading from Qatar to the Mediterranean and on to European markets to undermine the Russian economy. According to Charis Chang,

As Harvard Professor Mitchell A Orenstein and George Romer wrote last month (November, 2015) in *Foreign Affairs*, Russia currently supplies Europe with a quarter of the gas it uses for heating, cooking, fuel and other activities.

In fact 80 per cent of the gas that Russian state-controlled company Gazprom produces is sold to Europe, so maintaining this crucial market is very important.

Some would contend that Assad’s decision to reject the pipeline was a consequence of Russian pressure or influence in Damascus, and that Russia’s military actions in Syria take their inspiration from Putin’s desire to protect the nation’s gas markets in Europe, which is the most important reason behind his support of Assad. The desire to complete this pipeline, in turn, has inspired Qatar to provide over \$3 billion to anti-Assad rebel groups between 2011 and 2013. As reported by Robert F. Kennedy Jr. in *CounterPunch* (2016),

secret cables and reports by the U.S., Saudi and Israeli intelligence agencies indicate that the moment Assad rejected the Qatari pipeline, military and intelligence planners quickly arrived at the consensus that fomenting a Sunni uprising in Syria to overthrow the uncooperative Bashar Assad was a feasible path to achieving the shared objective of completing the Qatar/Turkey gas link. In 2009, according to WikiLeaks, soon after Bashar Assad rejected the Qatar pipeline, the CIA began funding opposition groups in Syria. It is important to note that this was well before the Arab Spring-engendered uprising against Assad (January-July 2011).

Kennedy adds that:

While the compliant American press parrots the narrative that our military support for the Syrian insurgency is purely humanitarian,

many Arabs see the present crisis as just another proxy war over pipelines and geopolitics. Before rushing deeper into the conflagration, it would be wise for us to consider the abundant facts supporting that perspective.

In their view, our war against Bashar Assad did not begin with the peaceful civil protests of the Arab Spring in 2011. Instead it began in 2000, when Qatar proposed to construct a \$10 billion, 1,500 kilometer pipeline through Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria and Turkey. Qatar shares with Iran the South Pars/North Dome gas field, the world's richest natural gas repository. The international trade embargo until recently prohibited Iran from selling gas abroad. Meanwhile, Qatar's gas can reach European markets only if it is liquefied and shipped by sea, a route that restricts volume and dramatically raises costs. The proposed pipeline would have linked Qatar directly to European energy markets via distribution terminals in Turkey, which would pocket rich transit fees. The Qatar/Turkey pipeline would give the Sunni kingdoms of the Persian Gulf decisive domination of world natural gas markets and strengthen Qatar, America's closest ally in the Arab world. Qatar hosts two massive American military bases and the U.S. Central Command's Mideast headquarters.

Moreover, we need to understand that the plans *for* Syria (and I emphasize *for* here) date back long before the civil unrest of 2011. We should also understand them as part of a much broader agenda. That is, we can't reduce the motivations behind the conflict that might have ultimately led to WWII to the pipeline issue. If anyone remains to write the history of this war, and if they have any concern at all for accuracy, they should trace the origins of the conflict at least as far back as September of 2000, when the neoconservatives behind the Project for a New American Century (PNAC) – headed by Robert Kagan, husband of the aforementioned Victoria Nuland, released “Rebuilding America's Defenses” (2000). This document, signed by a long list of familiar names from the Bush administration, called for a total repositioning of US military forces from their Cold War concentration in Europe to East Asia and the oil and gas rich region of the Middle East. Most ominously, considering that it was released one year prior to the events of 9/11, the PNAC report noted that “the process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event – like a new Pearl Harbor” (2000, p. 51).

Just days after September 11, 2001, as he recounted to Amy Goodman during a 2007 interview on *Democracy Now*, General Wesley Clark was informed

while visiting the Pentagon that the decision had already been made to invade Iraq, despite Iraq having nothing to do with those attacks. As great as that shock was to Clark, he said that it paled in comparison to the shock he received while visiting the Pentagon just a few weeks later. Speaking with the same person who had shared the information on the pending invasion of Iraq, Clark said, “‘Are we still going to war with Iraq?’ And he said, ‘Oh, it’s worse than that.’” He reached over on his desk. He picked up a piece of paper. And he said, ‘I just got this down from upstairs’ — meaning the secretary of defense’s office — ‘today.’ And he said, ‘This is a memo that describes how we’re going to take out seven countries in five years, starting with Iraq, and then Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and, finishing off, Iran.’” (Democracy Now, 2007).

I hope that people will stop to think about this. Just weeks after the country was allegedly attacked on 9/11 by a group of terrorists operating out of Afghanistan, the Pentagon is privately declaring war on and planning regime change in seven nations that had nothing to do with those attacks? Why? Why would the U.S. military focus on anything other than bringing Osama bin Laden and other al Qaeda operatives to justice? Could this explain why, just six months after 9/11, when asked during a press conference whether or not he thought capturing bin Laden was important, George W. Bush replied by saying:

Who knows if he’s hiding in some cave or not. We haven’t heard from him in a long time. The idea of focusing on one person really indicates to me people don’t understand *the scope of the mission* (emphasis added). Terror is bigger than one person. He’s just a person who’s been marginalized. ... I don’t know where he is. I really just don’t spend that much time on him, to be honest with you.

Could the “scope of the mission” and the disinterest in bin Laden explain why Dick Cheney and the Bush administration opposed launching any independent investigation of 9/11 until public pressure from family members of the victims forced them to concede to making some motion toward appeasing them by orchestrating the equivalent of a show trial that would support what had been the official narrative all along? Was the memo on bringing down seven governments reported by Clark an outgrowth of PNAC? If so, was 9/11 the “catastrophic and catalyzing event” needed to win public support for shifting the concentration of US military power from Europe to the Middle East? Whose interests, ultimately, did 9/11 serve?

The answers to these and many other questions relating to the events that could have precipitated a third world war may soon see greater light cast on them from a not-so-unpredictable source. The families of the victims of 9/11 have

continued to express a great deal of dissatisfaction with the answers provided to them on why their loved ones had to perish. What they want is a very old-fashioned idea. They want justice, and they haven't stopped their quest for that justice. And justice, as in any courtroom, rests contingent on determining the truth.

Along these lines, and through their efforts, something very interesting happened in Washington D.C. on September 27, 2016. For the first time since he took office, the United States Congress achieved the requisite two-thirds majority in each Chamber to override President Barack Obama's veto of a bill they sent before him. The bill in question (the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act [JASTA]) pertained to the 28 pages originally redacted from a report prepared by The Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities before and after the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001 (2002) - not to be confused with the 9/11 Commission Report [2004]). The Congressional Joint Inquiry was chaired by Senator Robert (Bob) Graham (D - FL), who, contrary to then President George W. Bush, did not believe releasing those pages would compromise intelligence sources. He even went as far, in July 2003, as petitioning the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence to release the entirety of his Inquiry's report, but the Committee refused to consider it, alleging that the release of those documents would interfere with counterterrorism efforts. As we know, however, leaks happen, and rumors as to the contents of those missing pages had been circulating long before, once again due to the efforts of 9/11 families in their pursuit of the answers - the full truth - that will lead to justice, Obama released the documents to the public in July of 2016. But it is important to acknowledge that the efforts of the 9/11 families pressured Obama to declassify and release those missing 28 pages. He didn't do it of his own volition. Their release, despite U.S. and Saudi statements to the contrary, confirmed the earlier rumors pointing to citizens and government officials in Saudi Arabia as having provided funding and other forms of support to the alleged 9/11 hijackers, most of whom (15 of 19) were themselves Saudi nationals. Even more significantly in some regards, those missing 28 pages also documented efforts on the part of the Bush administration to steer the FBI and other intelligence agencies away from possible Saudi participants, as if running interference for them, in the months leading up to 9/11, and then doing more than just covering their tracks in the years since 9/11. Graham, who has been at much greater liberty to speak on the contents of the 28 pages since their declassification, gave a very interesting interview to Paul Jay of Real News Network:

JAY: So could you explain particularly this last couple of sentences, "Primarily before the event. After the event, it shifts from being an

action that supports the activities to Saudis to actions that cover up the results of that permission given to the Saudis to act”? So can you elaborate on that?

GRAHAM: Well, and I'll get to the *why* question: why would the U.S. government have done this? And let me say, I no longer use the words *cover up* to describe what's going on. I find more accurate the words *aggressive deception (emphases original)*. The federal government has attempted to rewrite the narrative of 9/11 in order to exclude the role of the Saudis from that horrific story.

Why did they do it? I think there are a number of reasons. Some of them relate to the longtime, special, personal relationship between the Bush family and the Saudi Kingdom--goes back three generations to Herbert Walker Bush's father, Prescott Bush, a senator from Connecticut.

I think it also involves the long relationship that started in World War II when the United States essentially committed to provide security to the Saudis. The Saudis committed to provide a reliable source of petroleum to the United States and its allies.

And I think there's another issue here. And that is, if you'll recall, at the World Trade Center after 9/11, the president, with a bullhorn, said words to the effect that we are going to follow anyone who was found to have been in any way connected to this murder and that we will follow them to the ends of the earth--pretty strong words. And certainly, shortly thereafter, much of the information that you have outlined became available to the president.

Problem: the president wanted to go to war with Iraq, and he has painted at the site of the crime a path that looks like it's going directly to the Saudis, but that's not the destination he wants. So what do you do? You have to suppress all the information that would cause people to think that the Saudis were the people that he was talking about with the bullhorn at the World Trade Center and get the country prepared and willing to go to war against a country which was subsequently found out to have virtually, if not totally, nothing to do with 9/11.

The significance of Congress overriding Obama's veto of JASTA for questions of values and debt lies in two related areas. First, in terms of the contents of the legislation, it allows the families of those Americans who died in the attacks of 9/11 to sue the Saudi government in American courts. As reported by the New York Times, "(t)he new law, enacted over the fierce objections of the White

House, immediately alters the legal landscape. American courts could seize Saudi assets to pay for any judgment obtained by the Sept. 11 families.” Most relevant to our conversation on values and debt, however, Obama defended his veto on the grounds that allowing U.S. citizens to sue the Saudi government would compromise not only the “sovereign immunity” of Saudi Arabia, but could also open the door for citizens of other nations to sue the US government and, thus, compromise its own sovereign immunity. And it seems as if these concerns, provided that one accepts their underlying assumptions, were not without justification. According to *Al Arabiya*, an Iraqi group is now suing the United States government for the 2003 invasion of their country, urging “for a full-fledged investigation over the killing of civilians (sic) targets, loss of properties and individuals who suffered torture and other mistreatment on (sic) the hand (sic) of US forces.”³⁵

Though the corporate media have repudiated Congress for overriding Obama’s veto of the bill, causing many in Congress to want to reconsider the terms of the legislation, one 9/11 family member has already filed suit against the Saudi government. According to the *International Business Times*:

The claim, filed in a Washington DC court on behalf of Stephanie Ross DeSimone, her 14-year-old daughter, Alexandra, and her husband’s estate alleges that, ‘At all material times, Saudi Arabia, through its officials, officers, agents and employees, provided material support and resources to Osama bin Laden (“bin Laden”) and Al Qaeda.’³⁶

Thus far, I have read no one calling attention to Obama’s selective concern for another country’s sovereign immunity. He certainly has no concern for such when promoting TPP and TTIP (both supported by Clinton). Each of these faux trade agreements provide corporations the right to sue any government they wish, should that government enact any laws that would adversely effect a corporation’s profits. But these sorts of provisions violating sovereign immunity are nothing new; they simply aren’t reported to a degree that would bring public attention to them.

The *New York Times*, in December of 2014, did run a piece by Manuel Perez-Rocha in its “Opinion” section describing how

Investor-state dispute settlement provisions feature in many significant pacts, including the North American Free Trade Agreement, and nine U.S.-E.U. bilateral investment treaties. Foreign investors can sue over alleged violations of myriad “investor

protections,” including public-interest regulations that would reduce their profits....

Today, countries from Indonesia to Peru are facing investor-state suits. Mexico and Canada have lost or settled five each under NAFTA, paying hundreds of millions of dollars to foreign companies. In the largest award to date, Icsid in 2012 ordered Ecuador to pay \$1.77 billion to Occidental Petroleum for canceling its contract with the corporation. And this October, it ordered Venezuela to pay \$1.6 billion to Exxon to compensate for nationalizing oil projects. Nearly 200 disputes are pending at ICSID (International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes) alone.

American and European claimants have brought 75 percent of recent investor-state cases, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Unsurprisingly, Washington seeks to include investor-state-dispute provisions in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Perez-Rocha also points out that the reverse does not hold true. Under none of these investor-rights agreements do governments or communities affected by foreign investors have the right to sue corporations. In fact, the agreements prohibit them from doing so, suggesting that sovereign immunity today applies only to corporations and to certain states – the wealthiest states who work with corporations to write the rules in their favor.

Conclusion

What entities do we see in the economy of energy flows surrounding Hillary Clinton? We see neoliberals pushing trade deals/investor rights agreements and seeking to claim the U.S. government for its own. With the government comes the military, sectors of the intelligence community (CIA, especially) and the defense contractors. We also see the neoconservatives, pushing her to use that military in the service of empire-building around the energy/value rich Middle East. So, we see numerous Arab states and Israel seeking their share of that empire. Of course, we see multinational oil and gas industries heavily involved, including the fracking companies who she supports and promoted globally while she was Secretary of State. We see Wall Street investment firms profiting from all the carnage, while the Clinton Foundation brokers more opportunities to pay to play. And we see the MSM working to convince us nothing is wrong. Go back to sleep.

These entities that she helped consolidate to form her own economy of

energy flows form, for her, what is common. That's whose good she serves. We see what she values, where she puts her energy. We also see where she doesn't, where she only sees debt.

At the time of this writing, the water protectors among the Standing Rock Sioux nation in North Dakota are standing in bitter cold night air defending their land from the Dakota Access Pipeline. Meanwhile, heavily militarized police shoot rubber bullets and toss stun grenades into the crowd, or soak their already frigid bodies with water from fire hoses. The water protectors have been there for some time, long before the election. Reminding us, like the unarmed black men and women brutalized and murdered by police remind us, like the dead children, fathers, and mothers in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen, Palestine, and Syria remind us, that America isn't what we thought it was, and it never has been.

Clinton's only known reaction to the standoff at Standing Rock came in the form of a press release from her campaign on October 27th, 2016.

We received a letter today from representatives of the tribes protesting the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. From the beginning of this campaign, Secretary Clinton has been clear that she thinks all voices should be heard and all views considered in federal infrastructure projects. Now, all of the parties involved—including the federal government, the pipeline company and contractors, the state of North Dakota, and the tribes—need to find a path forward that serves the broadest public interest. As that happens, it's important that on the ground in North Dakota, everyone respects demonstrators' rights to protest peacefully, and workers' rights to do their jobs safely.³⁷

In other words, you might protest, but construction should and will continue uninterrupted. That's all the energy she has for you; that's all the value she sees in you. But who knows? She could still be the lesser of two evils.

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