

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND AFTER THE ELECTION

by *Dendrocnide*

No Difference

No matter who wins the election, it makes surprisingly little difference for many issues of strategy and tactics for those of us who oppose US imperialism. We ignore this at our peril.

No Alternative

Imperialism really isn't a point of difference between the two candidates. What's at issue is merely *how* the imperialism is to be conducted: should the self-appointed cop of the world be a good cop or a bad cop?

Kerry was apparently fond enough of the globo-cop idea that he thought it acceptable to give Bush a blank check to wage war in Iraq. He merely wanted that blank check to be used to blackmail the international community into cooperating based on a threat of unilateral war, instead of being used for unilateral war outright. And, along with Bush, Kerry has said he supports Sharon's land grab in the West Bank — a declaration of support which has got to be the worst foreign policy decision since invading Iraq. Some difference.

That's not to say a Kerry victory isn't to be preferred, only to clear up any confusion as to what we'd be getting with one. "Good cop" or "bad cop," it's still a self-appointed globo-cop.

No Hope

Let's be *really* optimistic here and assume I'm wrong above. Let's assume that not only does Kerry win, he actually realizes the above and inside wants to do more, but has been forced by the demands of the system to constrain his attempts.

It doesn't matter. The seats of power have been engineered so as to corrupt whomever happens to sit in them. Whether the corruption happens willingly or grudgingly, with or without an officeholder's conscious knowledge, the end result is the same regardless of his or her inner thoughts.

Do you really think the Republican-controlled House would let him? Do you really think the dittohead media wouldn't try and stampede people against him? Do you really think the wealthy that gave money to the Democrats to get Bush out would continue doing so if they were taxed significantly more so the non-rich don't pay for most of Bush's excesses? Think again.

No Decency

It's starting to sound pretty bleak. But really, there's no fundamental difference between the current situation and how the establishment has always operated.

The struggle to end slavery was opposed by both political parties of the day. It only achieved success after decades of sometimes violent direct action culminating in an outright civil war. The Progressive Era's reforms only took place after decades of rising unrest that culminated in the assassination of a president. The New Deal happened against the backdrop of surging Communist Party membership. The NAACP had been campaigning for civil rights for decades but only started getting them during the Sixties, accompanied by all sorts of racial unrest.

There is no intrinsic decency in the political system; it exists solely to serve the powerful. The system only concedes decent and humane measures when it finds its existence threatened by those who advocate abandoning it. The demands are conceded to preserve power, not to foster a more humane society. Any requests or demands in the absence of a significant movement seeking to overthrow the system will therefore be ignored.

Why should there be any alternative to continued imperialism? Why should there be any examination of a mass media that indoctrinates the populace into what is frankly a fascist value system? Why shouldn't normal Americans be made to foot the bill for the foibles of an irresponsible few at the top? Why shouldn't the poor be compelled to die in wars of imperialist aggression? Why should the veterans of such military campaigns get decent health care?

The ruled haven't started threatening the power structure as a result of such abuses, so there's no reason for the power structure to even think about changing its ways. Far from failing, the system is actually *working*. It's working to perpetuate its continued existence and power.

The only hope for change is to understand this motivation and to engage the system on that basis. In other words, stop considering

ourselves bound by the dictates of “legitimate” authority — act in solidarity with the rest of the world to frustrate its plans for continued world domination.

No Mandate

Of course, many reading this *do* believe that authority *is* indeed legitimate and *does* warrant respect, even though they personally may disagree with its decisions. At the very least there may be some hand-wringing and obsessing about the wishes of the just-under-half (or will it be a just-over-half?) that voted for Bush. Let’s try and address such objections with a few back-of-the-envelope statistical calculations.

The population of the USA is roughly 300 million. Let’s be real optimistic and assume that 150 million people vote. The population of the Earth is roughly 6 billion. 150 million divided by 6 billion is (drumroll) 2.5 percent of the world’s population.

Remember, the USA is an imperialist superpower. To paraphrase British folk singer Billy Bragg, when we elect a president, we don’t just elect a president for us, we elect one for the whole world. A world that, with the exception of that 2.5 percent, has no say whatsoever in whom becomes president.

The late, unlamented apartheid regime in South Africa was loudly and rightly condemned as unfree. The government that ruled there was rightly seen as illegitimate. That government’s policies restricted voting to those classified as “whites” — who comprised from 10 to 15 percent of the population at the time.

Let’s assume that half of those white South Africans voted regularly. Pay attention now: Half of 10 is 5. 5 is twice 2.5. *This means that apartheid-era South Africa was at least twice as democratic and twice as legitimate as the current US-dominated system of global imperialism is!*

Phony and Real Dangers

A common objection that defenders of the establishment will lob against the domestic antiwar movement, should it realize the need to cease being so obsessed with procedure and legality, is that we’re undermining national security by fomenting domestic unrest.

To some degree, that’s true. It’s certainly a valid concern on the face of it — there are definitely those out there with murderous intentions.

But it ignores the very real benefits of the world being treated to the spectacle of militant opposition within the borders of the US. It’ll draw a line between the US government and the people governed by it. It’ll make it harder for terrorists to recruit operatives to target random Americans.

The long-term dangers of not doing anything to seriously oppose imperialism and the ruling class are far worse. Events of the past four years have amply demonstrated that the greatest threat to domestic security is *imperialism itself*.

It was imperialism that’s caused so many in the Mideast to hate Americans so much that some are willing to fly planes into our office buildings. It’s petro-imperialism that drives the decades-long cozy relationship with the House of Saud — a relationship that led to canning an investigation that would have prevented 9/11, because it was fingering too many Saudis. It’s imperialism (more precisely, the desire to shield it from public scrutiny) that’s behind the doctrine of “politics ends at the nation’s borders” — a doctrine that enabled Bush to lie his way into a war in Iraq that’s probably doing more to foster terrorism than anything else the US has done in its history.

The single most important thing that can be done to build a more secure world is to smash imperialism.

So, What next?

From Nicaragua to the Phillipines, from Guatemala to Iraq, from Haiti to Iran, and from Chile to Indonesia, imperialist atrocities have been committed by various administrations of both parties over the years. Numerous elections have transpired during these years. It seems unlikely that one more is going to seriously change things.

I’ll close with the words of Subcomandante Marcos: “[T]he question is not whether we can change the murderous march of the powerful. No. The question we should be asking is: could we live with the shame of not having done everything possible to prevent and stop this war?”

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