

ECO-IMPERIALISM: Green Power - Black Death

Excerpts from Chapters

(Note: All endnotes and citations in original text have been deleted; asterisks denote missing text.)

2. Roots of Eco-Imperialism

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At their root, these intertwined CSR doctrines [of stakeholder participation, sustainable development, the precautionary principle and socially responsible investing] primarily reflect the concerns, preferences and gloomy worldview of a small cadre of politicians, bureaucrats, academics, multinational NGOs and wealthy foundations in affluent developed countries. These self-appointed guardians of the public weal have little understanding of (and often harbor a deep distaste for) business, capitalism, market economies, technology, global trade, and the vital role of profits in generating innovation and progress.

Yet, it is they who proclaim and implement the criteria by which businesses are to be judged, decide which of society's goals are important, determine whether those goals are being met, and insist that countervailing needs, viewpoints and concerns be relegated to minor status. In so doing, they seek to impose their worldview and change society in ways, and to degrees, that they have not been able to achieve through popular votes, legislation or judicial decisions.

Inherent in the doctrines are several false, pessimistic premises that are at the core of ideological environmentalism. Eco activists erroneously believe, for example, that energy and mineral resources are finite, and are rapidly being exhausted. That activities conducted by corporations, especially large multinational companies, inevitably result in resource depletion, environmental degradation, impaired human and societal health, social harm and imminent planetary disaster. And that it is primarily profits, not societal or consumer needs and desires – and certainly not a desire to serve humanity – that drive corporate decision-making.

In a nutshell, CSR doctrines are rooted too much in animosity toward business and profits, too much in conjectural problems and theoretical needs of future generations – and too little in real, immediate, life-and-death needs of present generations, especially billions of poor rural people in developing countries. The mutant doctrines give radical activists unprecedented leverage to impose the loftiest of developed world standards on companies, communities and nations, while ignoring the needs, priorities and aspirations of people who struggle daily just to survive.

Actually implementing the doctrines requires significant centralized control of land and energy use, economic production and consumption, corporate innovation and initiative, markets, transportation, labor, trade, housing, policy making processes and people's daily lives. Under the activists' agenda, control would be monitored and enforced through United Nations, European Union, US and other government agencies. All this is the antithesis of the private property rights, capitalism, and freedom of nations, communities, companies and individuals to make their own decisions, in accord with their own cultural preferences and personal or societal needs – and thereby generate prosperity, human health and environmental quality.

The ideological version of corporate social responsibility thus stands in direct opposition to the systems that have generated the greatest wealth, opportunities, technological advancements, and health and environmental improvements in history. Its real effect is to cede decision-making to a few; reduce competition, innovation, trade, investment and economic vitality; and thereby impair future social, health and environmental improvements.

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[In short,] corporate social responsibility – as currently defined and applied – ignores the legitimate aspirations and needs of people who have not yet shared the dreams and successes of even lower and middle income people in the developed world. It should come as no surprise that the poor people in developing countries increasingly view CSR, not as a mechanism to improve their lives, but as a virulent kind of neo-colonialism that many call eco-imperialism.

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