

Government, Taxation, and Humanity

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“The only thing we learn from history....is that men never learn from history.”

-Sir John Glubb, *The Fate of Empires and Search for Survival*

Two hundred and fifty years, give or take. Ten generations. That's how long, historically, an empire lasts, according to Sir John Glubb in his essay *The Fate of Empires and Search for Survival*. This means the American dream is on it's way out. We have had our time. And we are now, at this time and as all empires end up, a splintered, confused, self-indulgent group of people. There is nothing to be done except search for a new beginning. And new beginnings require new philosophies.

For the years I have spent on this planet, the most vexing problem I see for we humans is how to create a civilized society, that is of course, how do we govern ourselves. A society that accounts for all its citizens in a way that creates a vested interest and benefits for all its members? I can state without hesitation that anarchy is good for no one and unbridled capitalism, monarchy and fascism, only a few. So, where would we start? Back to our human beginning I say, with what I would call tribal economics based on fierce egalitarianism. I mean, doesn't science clearly reveal that we are really a global tribe?

But first the above begs the question, “Why do we need governments anyway?”. All sorts of reasons will pop up but I will argue the greatest reason is for protection. Protection from nature for sure. But certainly, we all know that no man is an island unto himself and that as a team, working together, we create wealth. And where there is wealth, whether that be in gold or

knowledge, that most vicious and dangerous phenomenon on the face of the earth, a group of men, will seek to own it.

A team, that's what we are. And any team needs rules of conduct. These rules are codified by our government and economic theory. That is, we the people, establish a social contract, a well-known term, via our government. We outline the rules and the government lets everyone know what they are and enforces them. Straightforward and simple yes? But then why do governments fail us so miserably so often? There are two main reasons, greed, and individuality. Some people think they are better than others and think they deserve more, for whatever reason. These people do not really see the basic interconnections that we all provide, each dependent on the other for the strength of the society or they just don't care. But really, who is to argue that the doctor is more important than the person who collects our trash? How long would the doctor be able to perform his duties if he had to devote his time to also provide for a clean environment? Or how safe would the money man be if the police could not feed their children or afford a healthy body? Often we will hear from certain people, "But look what I have achieved through my own industry and decisions and my special talent!", never really understanding that there are a thousand people that could replace them instantly no matter how special they think they are, and probably do a better job. These "certain people" need to understand that they are who they are and where they are simply by chaotic birth, luck, and circumstance, nothing more. No person can predict how each of their decisions will unfold, only chaos decides. To be sure, each human is unique, but we are not uniquely special. The understanding that we are a team and all team members should have certain minimums to perform satisfactorily is of the utmost importance to the smooth functioning of the team...our proposed society.

And what are these minimums? This is where we point to tribal economics and fierce egalitarianism. The most important minimums are health, security and skill. The health, security and skill to be creative in business, science or the arts, because it is through the creative enterprise that wealth is created. And how do we assure these minimums are achieved for all? Taxation. Progressive taxation. The more our social contract benefits individuals, the more those individuals contribute back to society. Those that have benefited so much give back relatively more with the understanding that they would not be where they are if it were not for the team. I mean really, what could be more fair? This taxation should assure a team member's health, security and education will not be at the whim of some bureaucratic contrariness but rather a given because we understand that a healthy, secure and educated citizenry is paramount to creating the wealth that we all crave of our social contract.

It is really that simple. A basic degree of humanity for all which gives rise to the success of the team. The common man is not lazy. Most people work very hard for so very little. How long will people embrace a social contract if they feel their work obtains so little, perhaps not even a way to stay healthy? How long will the warfighter give so much for a society that benefits them so little? Indeed, the warfighters, which includes the police, are the first to become the mercenaries that leave a society so vulnerable to destruction from domestic and foreign enemies.

One last thought. Throughout human history, the civilized centers have succumbed to the barbarian fringes when the social contract no longer provides a vested interest to the majority of its citizens. It's human nature.

Why care for those that don't care for you?