

# 'Unrest stems from economic interests'

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**Question: The US was hit several times with recessions and inflation, why didn't we see the same kind of unrest we are now seeing in the Middle East?**

**Answer:** In the US we had our share of civil conflicts driven by economic forces. The European immigrants brought slaves from Africa to use as cheap labour for farming the land. The colour of their skin was only a rationalisation for the continuation of the slavery system. All the segregation and discrimination rules against the blacks at that time were made to preserve the existing economic system and the interest of its beneficiaries. Although history books attribute the American Civil War to states and civil rights, the driving force behind the war was the conflict of economic interests.

American rulers learned their lessons early on and created a socioeconomic system that allowed a free distribution of wealth and power. Today, we have a black president, we have more people leave their parents' economic class and become richer regardless of their religious, ethnic or national background.

Despite having more diverse people in our society than any other nation, we have more stable national politics. If our elites try to limit the openness of the socioeconomic system, the system will be corrected in any number of forms including civic unrest. When Bush's administration invaded Iraq and bailed out Wall Street, the people brought in Obama. When Obama bailed out Wall Street again and considered raising the tax on the people, the people brought the Tea Party into power and the ruling party lost control of the Congress. Corrections are made via peaceful elections.

When people have hope that their economic conditions can improve by simply working harder, they care less about politics, race and religion. They may not like many things in their society but they are unlikely to get angry to a point of uprising or dividing the country. When people feel stuck or when they

**In the third and final part of a series of interviews, Med Jones explains how the US has survived financial crises in the past and how economic interests are behind global conflicts.**

are poor and do not have much to lose, they are more likely to rise against the people in power, even if they belong to the same ethnic, religious or political group.

**Q: Is it safe to say that there is no risk to the US national integrity from high unemployment rates and rising inflation?**

**A:** The integrity of states is ruled by the socioeconomic well-being theory. The degree of stability of any social system is proportional to the degree of its economic growth and vice versa. In other words, the risk to national integrity increases proportionally with the country's economic decline.

When the members of a

sociopolitical system share the same economic interests and the existing system produces enough economic opportunities to meet their needs, they are likely to tolerate existing differences and work together towards shared benefits.

On the other hand, when the system fails to produce enough economic opportunities over a period of time, they are likely to compete more aggressively for existing resources, causing divisions among them to grow stronger.

The degree of social cohesiveness will diminish and divisions could take different forms such as ethnic, religious and geographic conflicts and at times

class warfare or civil wars. If not managed properly, such sociopolitical systems can become dysfunctional. If the dysfunction is left untreated, at a certain point it will take more energy to fix the system than to let it collapse.

History teaches us that people from different religions and ethnic groups can be united around one shared economic goal – equality and prosperity for all.

We saw that in the rise of the communist USSR. When the economic policies of the USSR failed, ethnic and national divisions took the forefront and the USSR was dissolved.

That can happen to the US if we are hit hard enough by hyperinflation and currency collapse.

How the divisions evolve and what forms they will take depend on the type and speed of the government's reaction. It is too early to foresee such events. However, it is important to note that no country is above the socioeconomic laws, the US included.

**Q: You mentioned that wrong economic policies can cause international conflicts. Can you elaborate?**

**A:** The inflationary pressure forces and socioeconomic laws are also applicable to international relations. The historical crusades against Muslim lands, the colonisation of Spain by the Muslim Moors and India by the British were all driven by economic interests, despite the advertised reasons that were used to mobilise their armies at the time. The invasion of Iraq was not about spreading democracy or weapons of mass destruction, it was about the oil. Iraq has one of the world's largest proven oil reserves.

Oil is a strategic US economic interest, especially with the rise of China and India, and the rise of the global demand for energy resources. The division between the Kurds and the Arabs of Iraq is driven by oil.

The division of Sudan between the north and the south is driven by the control of natural resources. Throughout history, national and international conflicts can be traced to economic reasons, they can be disguised under different propaganda and may take different forms as conflicts evolve, but these forms are the effect not the cause.

Today, there is a lot of tension behind the scene between major powers on global economic and monetary policies. Currency wars could eventually lead to physical wars.

The international media must look beyond the declared reasons for international conflicts. It is the duty of journalists to explore all angles, so the attention of the people is not monopolised by any single point of view.



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