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On Steve Miran: Propaganda As Economics

On April 7, Steve Miran, Chairman of President Trump's Council on Economic Affairs, (the CEA) and Trump's top economic advisor, gave an address to the right wing, arch-capitalist, Hudson Institute.



His remarks began with Trump's central propaganda lie, that the United States provides "global public goods" for the entire world, the lie that is used to justify both his domestic and foreign policies; his insults and attacks on allies, his patchwork attempt to extricate the USA from its defeat in its war against Russia, in Ukraine, while at the same time committing acts of aggression against The Palestinians, against the Houthis of Yemen, threatening war on Iran, threatening war on China, even on tiny Denmark, Panama and the larger Canada.

The world does not need and should not want an American “defense umbrella,” nor its “trading system,” a system for the benefit of them and penury for everyone else

America Demands the World Must Pay

The lie is followed by the demand that the world must pay for the supposed benefits the Americans have given them. But what are these alleged benefits? Miran stated the following:

“First, the United States provides a security umbrella which has created the greatest era of peace mankind has ever known. Second, the U.S. provides the dollar and Treasury securities, reserve assets which make possible the global trading and financial system which has supported the greatest era of prosperity mankind has ever known.”

He then complains that these “benefits” are costly for the Americans to provide in terms of money and manpower.

But the United States has never provided a “security umbrella,” to anyone. What it has done is impose its will on or try to impose its will on the rest of the world by creating the NATO military alliance which had the sole purpose of war on the USSR and later Russia, and by creating secondary military alliances in other parts of the world, not for the security of the nations involved but to benefit the United States in its quest for world hegemony.

At the end of the Second World War, the United States, the sole big power that was not severely damaged by the war, rose up on the ashes of Europe and Asia and saw that it could take over the world for its unfettered exploitation and decided to make the attempt.

Nuclear War and the Security Umbrella

Their first act of creating this “security umbrella” was to use nuclear weapons against two Japanese cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, in the last days of the war with Japan, not to bring the defeat of Japan, which had already been decided, but to demonstrate to the USSR, and to the world, that a ruthless new power had come into being, a monster that no one should dare oppose. It was a statement that the United States was master of the world and all other states were now its servants. The Japanese expressed the horror of their experience in the film, *Godzilla*, which was the metaphor for America and what it did to Japan.

The second act was their attack on North Korea in 1950 with the puppet forces of the south, which had the goal of not only destroying the communist forces in Korea, but to drive into China to try to overthrow the communist government of China which had taken power a few months before. The Chinese, just ending the civil war and victorious over the invading Japanese, now had to fight another war against the Americans, and fight they did, bringing the American mighty war machine to its knees.

There was no need for atomic bombs to be used against the Japanese. There was no need for the war against the Korean and Chinese peoples, none at all, except the lust for world power that rests deep in the American national character. It was not security that the Americans brought to Asia, but war, and atrocities that beggar the imagination, for which no American has ever been held accountable.

The Cold War and Insecurity

The so-called Cold War was the war of American capital and its now vassal states in the Atlantic alliance against the USSR. It was not a war by the USSR against them. It did not bring security but constant insecurity and the threat of nuclear war.

The USSR had to rebuild its society and economy after the vast destruction caused by the German led European invasion of the USSR-we now know, backed by the USA and UK as well. The Cold War was entirely an American and British creation, to which the USSR had to respond.

The cost of that war was paid for in lost trade by all the European countries with the USSR, (and later China as well) the blocking of global trade by embargoes and sabotage, the control of international capital by the United States, and through this control of money and the constant threat of its power, the United States imposed a vast security structure on the world. Over the decades, hundreds of military bases were built to maintain its dominance and control. The countries in which those bases were built gained nothing from their presence, and have had to help pay for the infrastructure that supported them, have had to suffer the forced immunity of American troops against their peoples for crimes committed against them, and have made themselves complicit in every act of aggression that the USA has committed since 1945.

Did the USA provide security to the people of Vietnam, to the Latin American peoples oppressed by right-wing dictatorships supported and aided by the United States throughout the 1960s 70s and 80s and even now? Was Operation Condor an act of peace? Was the overthrow of President Allende in Chile an act of security for the Chilean people? The reader can ask the same question about the events in most of the Latin American and Caribbean countries, governments overthrown, citizens murdered or disappeared, terrorism against the population as happened in Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador, in the nations of Africa, from Somalia to Rwanda, Congo, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, Sudan, Libya, in the Middle East, Lebanon, the invasion of Iraq twice, the invasion of Afghanistan, the invasion of Syria, still ongoing, the NATO war on Russia in Ukraine, a war prepared for and directed by the

United States to achieve what Hitler failed to achieve, the destruction of Russia and its occupation.

The answer is clear. The United States never provided anyone with a security umbrella. They have provided instead a steady rain of terror and war on the world and the world has paid for it, not the United States, which profited from those wars. And the allies it now complains about got little from the American wars to justify their expense. The Americans forced their allies to take part in American wars, wars fought for the benefit of the United States, not them. The American allies supplied weapons, ammunition, logistics, manpower, and legal cover for American aggression. The US used allied forces as auxiliaries, but the United States did not pay for them, the allies had to pay for all this themselves. It is not the US which is owed anything, it is the allies that are owed recompense for all the help the US received for it to be able to carry out these wars.

Miran also claims that US military power ensured world economic stability. That is another distortion of the facts. The constant wars interrupted trade, caused energy crises, and created human tragedy on a vast scale. If these wars had not taken place, the world would be much ahead in economic development. It is the USA that has played the main role in disrupting and suppressing economic development of the world for decades and is intent on continuing this destructive path.

With respect to his second claim, he added,

“On the financial side, the reserve function of the dollar has caused persistent currency distortions and contributed, along with other countries’ unfair barriers to trade, to unsustainable trade deficits. These trade deficits have decimated our manufacturing sector and many working-class families and their communities, to facilitate non-Americans trading with each other.”

He talks as if other nations have taken advantage of the USA when everyone with any sense of history knows that it was the Americans themselves that created the dollar as a reserve currency, that it was they that bullied everyone into using it, and it was the US that built up a world economic structure that benefitted it for many years, organisations such as the International Monetary Fund, the GATT system, the World Trade Organisation, the SWIFT system, and a myriad of “non-governmental” organisations they controlled to advance their propaganda and methods, to control a system that harmed countries it did not like, such as Cuba, among many others.

It was they that pushed for global free trade when their economy was strong and they were dominant in the world. It was they that devalued the dollar by abandoning the gold standard

in 1971, partly to pay their debts of the Vietnam War, and now they claim that the use of the dollar as a reserve currency, “distorts markets” by keeping the US dollar too high. We see that things have become so bad for them, that now they want to reverse policy and devalue their currency so their goods will be cheaper, but all it will do is increase the rise in prices as the dollars slides down in value.

Tariffs are justified by pretexts

The decision to use tariffs is also justified on these pretexts, none of which are based on facts and history. Trump and Miran claim the US is “being ripped-off” when what they really mean is that the system they created to rip off the rest of the world is no long working for them with the rise of equally dominant economies, from China to India to Brazil and places in between. No one ripped off the USA. When did the USA ever allow itself to be taken advantage of? Never. It was always bent on taking advantage of everyone else and used its financial, economic and military might to achieve those ends.

It was the United States leadership and elite that decided to allow US manufacturers to relocate their factories to cheap labour countries such as China, Mexico, Haiti, Vietnam, Eastern Europe and so on because they earned more profit with cheaper labour. Huge profits flowed into America’s coffers because of this. But who exploited who? In China, the government provided the education and skills of the workers employed in US factories, provided the infrastructure for them to live, to move, their health care. The American companies never compensated China for this, nor the other countries where they located for cheap labour.

In fact, one of the problems with Trump’s plan to force US and foreign companies to relocate to the USA to increase production there is that the US does not have a cheap labour force, at least not a legal one. Illegal immigrants can be and are used as very cheap labour in the US, bordering on slave labour, with no employment right, no unions, but Trump seems intent on getting rid of them and relying on domestic American labour. To make that work, he has to drive down wages in the US and this is another reason he wants to devalue the dollar, which will in effect lower wages in the US and so increase the rate of profit of manufacturers.

Marin closes his remarks by attacking China, claiming it is an adversary. It is only an adversary because the Americans make it so. He even makes the absurd claim that China is to blame for the financial crisis in the USA in 2008-9. Then he talks about “fairness,” that the USA must be treated fairly. He really means unfairness for he ends with the claim that the world must share the burden of rebuilding the American industrial base, that is, the rest of the world must pay for America’s failed policies, for its mistakes and be happy to do so.

And to ensure this “fairness” he suggests the following, with my comments noted afterward; What forms can that burden sharing take? There are many options, here are a few ideas:

- “First, other countries can accept tariffs on their exports to the United States without retaliation, providing revenue to the U.S. Treasury to finance public goods provision. Critically, retaliation will exacerbate rather than improve the distribution of burdens and make it even more difficult for us to finance global public goods.”

Here Marin makes a fundamental mistake, since the “other countries” will not pay the tariffs, the American people will. It is they who will provide revenue to the US Treasury. The American people are going to get a lot poorer.

- “Second, they can stop unfair and harmful trading practices by opening their markets and buying more from America;”

This makes mud of his complaint of “distortions” in the market for unless US goods are in demand and at a cost people can accept, artificial techniques to force the sale of US goods in foreign markets, to distort market mechanisms, is to distort the market. It cannot work. People will buy what they want and can get. But maybe the Americans will go further and send every foreign citizen a letter demanding that they buy US goods, or else.

- “Third, they can boost defense spending and procurement from the U.S., buying more U.S.-made goods, and taking strain off our service members and creating jobs here;”

This is nothing but another shakedown, using threats and bullying to force foreigners to buy US products, which in the military field are now proven to be inferior to and more costly than similar machines and technologies produced by other nations. As for strain on their service members, that is easily solved; close the foreign US bases and repatriate the US forces to the USA.

- “Fourth, they can invest in and install factories in America. They won’t face tariffs if they make their stuff in this country;”

Why US investors are not ready, willing and able to build factories is not stated, but it is an admission that there is a lack of them and so, in desperation, the Americans are begging, and bullying other nations to dismantle their economies to enrich the American, a fool’s bargain.

- “Fifth, they could simply write checks to Treasury that help us finance global public goods.”

The hubris contained in this statement is so extreme, one has to wonder if it is meant as a joke. But Miran seems to be serious. The Americans have gotten themselves into such a bizarrely narcissistic and delusional state that they actually think the world owes them a favour when it is the United States that owes the world.

Miran concludes with this:

“Burden sharing can allow the United States to continue leading the free world for many decades. It’s a must not only for fairness, but for feasibility. If we don’t rebuild our manufacturing sector, we will be strained in providing the security we need for our safety and to underpin our financial markets. The world can still have the American defense umbrella and trading system, but it’s got to start paying its fair share for them. Thank you, and I am happy to take some questions.”

The World Response

The world must respond to that by telling the United States, that the world does not need its wars and so does not need its security, either for safety or to underpin financial markets controlled by the United States. The world does not need and should not want an American “defense umbrella,” nor its “trading system,” a system for the benefit of them and penury for everyone else. What the world needs and wants are real peace, general disarmament, dissolution of all military blocks, and a reign of harmony, friendship and cooperation among all the nations of the world and the only power standing in the way of this reign of harmony, friendship and cooperation is the United States of America.

Christopher Black, April 11, 2025

Christopher Black is an international criminal lawyer based in Toronto. He is known for a number of high-profile war crimes cases and recently published his novel Beneath the Clouds.

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