

The Stock Market, Trump and the Future

by Phillip W. Weiss

The stock market is the very epitome of corruption. No institution is more open and vulnerable to outside influence than the stock market. A mere rumor can trigger a major panic. Inside information abounds, politicians are involved in the market, a rumor report can induce an immediate buying or selling stampede, like a herd of bison spooked by the ruffling of a leaf. This is corruption.

If we use the definition of corruption to mean undue outside influence from sources that are not part of the organization, then the stock market is rife with corruption. The stock market is a private organization that serves as a place where companies can sell shares to the public which then can buy or sell these shares based on speculation.

The problem with the stock market is not risk, because in life everything entails a certain amount of risk. The future is uncertain and nowhere is that more apparent than in the stock market where uncertainty abounds. The problem is that the stock market is vulnerable to factors that have nothing to do with the intrinsic strength of the economy. Nor does the interests of the stock market necessarily coincide with the interests of the United States. While the stock market is in the United States, investors are from all over the world. The stock market operations transcend borders, is international in scope, and is geared up not to advance the American agenda but to make money. Loyalty to the

United States is not a condition for investing in stocks and bonds. In fact, the stock market model is more akin to that of the United Nations than to any domestic American political institution. Hence, Mr. Trump's efforts to secure the borders, change international trade relations, and assert US interests abroad may not be well received on Wall Street.

Further, investing in the stock market is fraught with insecurity. Money can be quickly made but also quickly lost. Over the long run, an investor can make a lot of money, but the problem is that for the individual investor, who lives day-to-day and has immediate financial obligations, long term investment may not be a realistic option. Nor is the stock market a bank where money is held secure. The opposite is the case. Investments are liquid, their monetary value fluctuate by the second, feeding into the uncertainty that makes financial planning all but impossible.

The stock market is a gambler's paradise but offers a game that is rigged. Market conditions are subject to the political whims of others who are not investors. These others include the president and the Federal Reserve whose pronouncements can, and do, rock the stock market, causing panic and creating havoc. In this respect the stock market as a repository of money is as firmly based as a bowl of jelly.

Some are becoming disenchanted with Mr. Trump. He is playing with fire trying to broker a cease fire between Russia and Ukraine. Trump seems to be treating that war as game. It isn't a game, and these countries are not children to

be scolded. As a result of Trump's initiative, Russia, China and Iran are demanding that the United States end its sanctions and negotiate based on the principle of mutual respect. These countries are not buying into Trump's pretentious representation as peace broker. There is nothing about Trump that suggests that he is interested in peace. He is into power politics and is pushing an America-first agenda. Hence, Mr. Trump is not an honest broker.

Trump is committing the United States to become directly involved with Ukraine, a nation beset with many serious problems, not least of which is its proximity to Russia. When you include Mr. Trump's aggressive trade policies which are rocking the entire world and is not reacting well to Trump's threats, Trump's foreign policy gives cause for concern and even alarm. Please understand, these comments are not a rejection of Mr. Trump's pro-America agenda. In a world where other nations have taken advantage of the goodwill of the American people draining our financial coffers, the readjustment of priorities and a reassessment of American interests was long overdue.

In this respect, Mr. Trump is delivering on his promise to make America great again and other nations that for decades was riding the U.S. gravy train don't like it. However, this resurgence of America first comes with risks that cannot be ignored for to ignore them could put the survival the United States at risk.

Th United States exists in a hostile world. Our closest allies can turn on us at the blink of an eye, and often do, in venues such as the United Nations, the

international courts and other international forums where countries are looking out for their own interests. Hence, the United States is alone. The United States can depend on no one except itself. This is a fact. But for a long time U.S policy makers have been operating in a fantasy world in which there are nations with whom the United States shares common interests which they can pursue and defend together. That concept is as valid and legitimate as the proverbial three-dollar bill.

Yet, US foreign policy has been based on this very concept which has made the United States vulnerable to exploitation. Mr. Trump wants to end that. Unfortunately, that is easier said than done and is fraught with danger. Other nations who the US thought were allies are already openly expressing their hostility to the United States. In a way, that is good because it clears the air and provides an opportunity for open and honest communication. But in another way, it is bad because of the unpredictability of these other nations responses. This can produce unintended consequences that could quickly gyrate out of control. Hence, the need for caution as Mr. Trump tries to create a new international political order.