Delegitimize Totalitarianism

Totalitarian systems oppress and exploit their own citizens, and are rarely content with maintaining control of their own borders. In fact, when viewing recent history, it is clear that authoritarian regimes have instigated, or contributed to, major conflicts during the past century in an attempt to expand their territory.

In order to minimize the damage these systems exert on their own citizens, while also limiting their ability to expand into other countries, it is imperative that economic constraints come into play that delegitimize their authority and contribute to their removal from power.

Even in democratic systems of government, it is understood that running for reelection when the economy is suffering does not bode well. Sadly, this principle is often ignored when dealing with totalitarian regimes. In other words, if an economy is negatively impacted, the citizens will eventually act to correct this serious problem. Hence, regime change will occur without interference from outside forces. Before discussing how to achieve this needed change, a brief definition of totalitarianism will be provided:

Totalitarianism is a form of government or a political system that prohibits opposition parties, restricts individual opposition to the state and its claims, and exercises an extremely high degree of control over public and private life. Examples of leaders who ruled totalitarian regimes are Joseph Stalin, former General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; Adolf Hitler, former Fuhrer of Germany; Mao Zedong, former Chairman of the Communist Party of China; Benito Mussolini, former Duce of Italy; and Kim II-sung, the Eternal President of North Korea.

Totalitarian regimes are often characterized by extensive political repression, a complete lack of democracy, widespread personality cultism, absolute control over the economy, massive censorship, mass surveillance, limited freedom of movement (most notably freedom to leave the country) and widespread use of state terrorism. Other aspects include the use of concentration camps, repressive secret police, religious persecution or state atheism, the common practice of executions, fraudulent elections (if they take place), possible possession of weapons of mass destruction and potentially state-sponsored mass murder and genocides. Historian Robert Conquest describes a totalitarian state as one which recognizes no limit on its authority in any sphere of public or private life and it extends that authority to whatever length is feasible (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Totalitarianism).

Historically, western governments have been slow, or naive, when it comes to restraining or curtailing the negative effects of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes. Leading up to the Second World War, the Prime Minister of Great Britain believed that appeasement was the best policy when dealing with the potential problem of fascism in Germany,

"Peace for our time" was a declaration made by the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain in his September 30, 1938 remarks in London concerning the Munich Agreement and the subsequent Anglo-German Declaration. The phrase echoed former Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, who, upon returning from the Congress of Berlin in 1878, stated, "I have returned from Germany with peace for our time." Prime Minister Chamberlain's use of this phrase is viewed as ironic because less than a year later, Hitler's invasion of Poland triggered

World War II with France and Great Britain declaring war on Germany after Hitler refused to withdraw from Polish territory (https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_for_our_time).

History will repeat itself again when leading western democracies do not recognize the potential threats posed by totalitarian regimes, and then act accordingly. In the run up to the 2020 Presidential election in the United States of America, the Democratic Party candidate claimed that the totalitarian regime known as the CCP should not be considered a serious threat,

"China is going to eat our lunch?" Come on, man." the former vice president said in Iowa, drawing the ire of lawmakers like Bernie Sanders and Mitt Romney (https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2020-election/biden-s-comments-downplaying-china-threat-u-s-fire-up-pols-on-both-sides).

This underestimation of a potential adversary is a grave mistake with potentially devastating consequences. Any policy of appeasement with a totalitarian regime will backfire just as it did leading up to World War II. The challenge, for citizens in western democracies when their governments do not embrace a doctrine of "peace through strength/resolve", is to make a determined effort to purchase their goods and services from only non-totalitarian countries. This requires sacrifice and self-discipline because goods and services from totalitarian countries are often much cheaper for the consumer. However, it is through a grassroots movement that affects the economy of totalitarian regimes that change can be affected. Yes, in the short term the citizens of these countries may also be negatively impacted. However, this is the means through which their objections to authoritarian control can be justified, and needful change will follow as a consequence.

Sadly, it is not only weak or naive western politicians that "drop the ball" when it comes to dealing with totalitarian regimes. It's also the leaders of commerce and technology who want to make their profits from these same countries. Therefore, they are quick to dismiss any thought of restraining their business activities in markets controlled by totalitarian authorities. This is not unique to our era because some U.S. companies were doing "business as usual" throughout the Second World War with countries that were killing American servicemen,

Only Standard Oil, Du Pont, and General Motors had rights to tetraethyl lead, an additive used in aviation gasoline. Germany's air force couldn't fly without it. Walter C. Teagle, chairman of Standard Oil, helped organize a sale of the precious substance (to Germany) by "borrowing" 500 tons from Ethyl, the British Standard subsidiary. The result was that Hitler's air force was capable of bombing London, (ironically) the city that had provided the supplies. Also, by supplying Japan with tetraethyl, Teagle helped make it possible for the Japanese to wage World War II (Trading With The Enemy by Charles Higham).

William Stamps Farish (of Standard Oil), with Teagle's approval, staffed the Standard Oil tankers with Nazi crews. When war broke out in Europe, he ran into trouble with British Intelligence, which boarded some of his vessels outside territorial waters on the Atlantic and Pacific seaboards and seized Nazi agents who were passengers. When the British began interrogating Nazi crews on the Hitler-Standard Oil connection, Farish fired the Germans en masse and changed the registration of the entire fleet to Panamanian to avoid British seizure or search. His vessels carried oil to Tenerife in the Canary Islands, where they refueled and siphoned oil to German tankers for shipment to Hamburg.

They also fueled U-boats even after the American government declared such shipments morally indefensible and while Roosevelt was fighting an undeclared war in the Atlantic. Standard Oil tankers supplied the self-same submarines which later sank American ships. By a humorous twist of fate, one of the ships the U-boats sank was the S.S. Walter Teagle (Trading With The Enemy by Charles Higham).

Had the American public been aware of the activities of their own corporate leaders during WWII, they could have boycotted their products as a grass roots movement to slow down the policy of doing "business as usual" with fascist and totalitarian regimes. In turn, this could have saved the lives of many American and allied servicemen.

Sadly, doing business as usual with totalitarian regimes has not changed, and probably never will as long as mankind values "profit over principle". As the following article confirms, the current government in China continues to enslave certain ethnic minorities within their own country, and then uses these "slaves" to produce products for western manufacturers and services because the labor costs are so low,

A report published Sunday by an Australian think tank revealed that as many as 83 internationally known brands – including Nike, BMW, Apple, Sony, Google, Lacoste, and Nintendo – have active ties to factories where evidence suggests the Communist Party has shipped Uyghur Muslims to engage in forced labor (Study: Nike, Apple, BMW Among 83 Brands Using Chinese Slave Labor by France Martel; Breitbart News).

Anciently, there was a nation that pretended to be righteous while still doing "business as usual", even though much of this business was contrary to the law of the God they claimed to worship and follow. In reality, the leadership of this nation was self-righteous and only paid "lip service" to their God. For example, they would invoke His name and engage in certain activities like "fasting" as a religious pretense, because inwardly they disdained His value system.

Is it a fast that I (God) *have chosen, a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, and to spread out sackcloth and ashes* (symbolizing humility)*? Would you call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? [6]Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To* **loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke***? [7]Is it not to* **share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out** (wandering); **when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh** (family members/citizens) (Isa. 58:6-7; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

For I (God) *know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins.* **You afflict the just and take bribes; you divert the poor from justice at the gate**. [13]**Therefore the prudent keep silent at that time, for it is an evil time** (Amos 5:12-13; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Obviously totalitarian leaders, including their counterparts in trade and commerce, are not concerned about the poor being oppressed. More often than not, it is on the backs of the poor that these same people make a profit, and by keeping the poor under control the profits are guaranteed to continue flowing. Therefore, it leaves only consumers who can affect any meaningful change to totalitarian regimes. This can be assisted by boycotting products, and the companies that produce them, whether those companies are foreign or domestic.