

What is Obama's end game?

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff
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Why are the Greeks rioting in Athens' streets? Simply because the socialist Greek government promised far more than it could deliver – and now national bankruptcy threatens the flow of government checks and free benefits in the Greek nanny state.

So, youths who want their government freebies to continue are rioting in the streets. It's a lot more fun than getting a job.

We've seen the same thing in France. There immigrant Algerians and Arabs set fire to cars and defy French police whenever an emotional cause presents itself – and often for no particular reason at all. After all, the idle immigrants don't have to work to eat – and don't have anything better to do.

Unless they push the French republic into insolvency.

Can a nation go belly up?

"Iceland goes bankrupt," writes Michael Mandel for *Business Week* magazine. "That's an amazing sentence. But that's exactly what happened. That's a clear sign that the global financial crisis is entering a new and vastly more dangerous phase.

"What 'bankrupt' means is the country cannot pay back its external debts and the Icelandic currency, the krona, has become essentially valueless in the rest of the world. That means the country can no longer pay for imports."

It's also an ominous warning for America

Riots and protests followed the first round of economic crisis in Reykjavik in 2008 as normally placid Icelanders called for the government of Iceland to resign. The collapse of the krona put much of the population at risk of losing their homes and life savings.

"Could similar scenes of civil unrest be repeated in the United States as the economy continues to implode?" asks columnist Paul Joseph Watson, who watched Iceland's riots as "at least five people were injured and Hordur Torfason, a well-known singer in Iceland and the main organizer of the protests, said the protests would continue until the government stepped down."

When crowds gathered in the drizzle before the Althing, the Icelandic parliament, Torfason declared: "They don't have our trust and they are no longer legitimate."

Hundreds more gathered in front of a local police station, pelting eggs at the windows, using a battering ram to force the doors open and demanding the release of a protester.

In Greece much more recently, national bankruptcy loomed as the Greek government could no longer afford the generous entitlements of its socialist nanny state paid to its idle unemployed. It has borrowed as much money as international lenders would allow. When the bankers turned off the money spigots, suddenly it was fiscal Judgment Day in Athens.

The European Union began waffling on a bailout and so the Greek government looked to the International Monetary Fund. However, the IMF will help imperiled countries only if they adopt strict austerity measures – such as shutting down their socialist entitlement programs.

Romania, the largest European country ever to receive an IMF rescue package, had to agree to cut public spending, eliminate a planned national wage increase, freeze all government hiring and increase taxes.

Is the same humiliation looming for America?

Just days ago, students were rioting in California – demanding free college tuition although the state government is broke. Washington is also broke, but nobody wants to face the truth. America's commitments to the Baby Boomer generation in terms of Social Security and Medicare far outweigh our national income. There is no money to pay them.

Why? Because our government has squandered America's riches.

“Our government spends much more money than it collects,” writes columnist James A. Bacon. “The Bush administration brought us half-trillion-dollar deficits. The Obama administration is giving us our first trillion-dollar deficit. Meanwhile, we still have the massive entitlements obligations of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid to deal with – obligations that would run up the federal deficit to \$4 trillion to \$5 trillion a year in a \$14.5 billion-a-year economy if Uncle Sam used ‘generally accepted accounting principles’ like the private sector does.

Owing \$5 trillion on an income of \$14.5 billion is bankruptcy

“For decades, the issue of deficit spending and unfunded entitlements seemed worrisome but remote. Disaster seemed so far away. Now, we can see it,” writes Bacon. “The first Baby Boomers are retiring and the generation that would ‘never grow old’ – which happens to be almost twice as large as the one succeeding it – soon will be drawing retirement benefits rather than paying payroll taxes.

“Add to that the recession – and seemingly overnight, everyone's sensibilities have been sharpened to the mess we've made for ourselves.”

But Obama doesn't seem to notice it. Or does he? Are we being set up for national disaster?

“If you thought America's culture wars, foreign policy debates, and presidential campaigns generated heated rhetoric, you ain't seen nothin' yet,” writes Bacon. “The looming conflict between the generations over entitlements for the graying population could shape up as the most bruising domestic issue since the Civil Rights movement.

“Indeed the generation gap – or, rather, the gap between the entitlements we think we deserve and those we can afford – could soon supplant race, class, and gender as the most divisive force in American politics. Won't that be fun?”

The issue is simple, he writes. There will be no money to pay government pensions or health care when the bulk of the children of the 1960s begin retiring.

“Economist Marc Faber laid out the crisis that he sees coming in the next 10 years,” writes columnist Julie Crawshaw. “Interest on U.S. debt will crush other spending, then inflation and depression will take hold and eventually lead to war.”

War? Yes, he says. Traditionally nations in as much trouble as America is in provoke wars to take everybody's mind off of the crisis. Argentina's attack on the Falkland Islands is a case in point. The nation was suffering from 800 percent inflation and massive unemployment. So, to rally the nation, the government attacked the Falklands, thinking that Great Britain would give up its remote colony – and everybody would feel good about being Argentine.

Instead, it was a disaster. The United Kingdom sunk Argentina's navy, destroyed the Argentine air force and retook the Falklands. Then the Falklands residents voted – and declared they wished to remain British.

What will happen in America?

“Maximum, within 10 years time more than 35 percent of tax revenues will have to be used to pay the interest on the government's debt, and then you're in trouble, because then there is not enough money out of the budget to pay for other stuff,” Faber said.

By the “other stuff,” he means defense and social programs.

So, what will happen?

“I am convinced that the U.S. government will go bankrupt, but not tomorrow, and before they go bankrupt they’ll print money, and then you get very high inflation rate, then you get depression with high inflation and eventually they’ll go to war.”

How could America’s national bankruptcy lead to war?

“Senior Chinese military officers have proposed that their country boost defense spending, adjust People’s Liberation Army deployments, and possibly sell some U.S. bonds to punish Washington for its latest round of arms sales to Taiwan,” writes Reuters journalist Chris Buckley in Beijing.

“The calls for broad retaliation over the planned U.S. weapons sales to the disputed island came from officers at China’s National Defence University and Academy of Military Sciences, interviewed by *Outlook Weekly*, a Chinese-language magazine published by the official Xinhua news agency.

“While far from representing fixed government policy, the open demands for retaliation by the PLA officers underscored the domestic pressures on Beijing to deliver on its threats to punish the Obama administration over the arms sales.”

“Our retaliation should not be restricted to merely military matters, and we should adopt a strategic package of counter-punches covering politics, military affairs, diplomacy and economics to treat both the symptoms and root cause of this disease,” said Luo Yuan, a researcher at the Academy of Military Sciences. “Just like two people rowing a boat, if the United States first throws the strokes into chaos, then so must we.”

Luo said Beijing could “attack by oblique means and stealthy feints” to make its point in Washington.

“For example, we could sanction them using economic means, such as dumping some U.S. government bonds,” Luo said.

The warnings came after weeks of strains between Washington and Beijing, who have also been at odds over Internet controls and hacking, trade and currency quarrels, and President Barack Obama’s meeting with the Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan leader reviled by China as a “separatist.”

So, if Chinese lenders start dumping their reserves of U.S. Treasury bonds – causing them to plummet in value – it could easily result in the U.S. calling the action an act of war.

So, what is the liberal response?

Are Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reed and Barney Frank finding ways to cut spending, reduce U.S. borrowing – and put the U.S. back on solid fiscal ground?

After it would just make sense that the Obama administration would bring spending to a screeching halt, abandon health care reform and do whatever is necessary to revive the American economy.

Instead the President and his liberal buddies are doing the exact opposite.

Is it utter insanity? Blindness to reality? Denial of America’s precarious situation?

Or intentional sabotage?

What is their reading of the situation? First, say the liberals, we should borrow every cent that the Communist Chinese bankers, the Russian moneylenders and Saudi oil sheiks will lend us, so that we are paying billions and billions weekly in interest to our worst enemies.

Then the liberal strategy is to continue the mad spending spree by printing dollars as if we were a Third World dictatorship – despite warnings that hyperinflation will end the dollar’s status as the international reserve currency and destroy our national economy. That could easily precipitate a worldwide economic depression.

But blindly the liberals in Congress and the White House plow ahead with their insanity. Instead of cutting back and tightening their belts, they spend as never before, voting for more freebies that simply cannot be delivered! Obama and Pelosi are determined to provide free health care for the entire nation!

So, what happens when the U.S. government cannot make good on its promises?

In Greece, serious street clashes erupted between rioting youths and police in central Athens just days ago as an estimated 60,000 demonstrated during a nationwide strike against the cash-strapped Greek government’s austerity measures.

Hundreds of masked and hooded youths punched and kicked police, who responded with volleys of tear gas and stun grenades. Violence spread as police faced off with stone-throwing anarchists. Suffocating clouds of tear gas sent protesters scurrying into alleys and breaking into surrounding buildings.

Greece lurched to a virtual standstill, grounding all air flights and bringing public transport to a halt. State hospitals were left with emergency staff only and all news broadcasts were suspended as workers walked off the job for 24 hours to protest the spending cuts and tax hikes designed to tackle the country’s debt crisis.

The politicians had lulled the population into depending on the government. Then when the government could not come through with its promises, the people rioted and burned.

But that could never happen here in America, could it?

That same day, students were in the streets in California, holding a “Day of Action” to protest fiscal cuts to higher education spending and increases in tuition. The protests turned violent with students seizing university buildings and blockading streets.

“Arnold Schwarzenegger’s waning months as California governor seem likely to end with a whimper,” writes columnist Ben Boychuk. “The wildly unpopular chief executive faces another bruising budget fight with a \$20 billion deficit to close.

“After entering office six years ago on a pledge to end ‘autopilot spending,’ he’s proposing a ballot initiative guaranteeing that the state’s colleges and universities automatically receive more funding than state penitentiaries,” writes Boychuck. “At the same time, Schwarzenegger is floating a pie-in-the-sky scheme to build prisons in Mexico that might be used to house some of the 20,000 illegal immigrants now incarcerated in the Golden State.

“But never mind all that. At least Schwarzenegger can leave office next January secure in the knowledge that his crowning policy achievement will outlive the state’s present economic woes.

“The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, better known as Assembly Bill 32, is the most far-reaching climate law in America. It takes full effect in 2012 and mandates that Californians cut greenhouse-gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, and another 80 percent by 2050. Those are wildly ambitious goals.

“And nothing – not a sluggish economy, a 12.4 percent state unemployment rate or the bill’s multibillion-dollar price tag can persuade Schwarzenegger that moving ahead with Assembly Bill 32 is his worst idea ever.

“Schwarzenegger insists that there’s no reason to believe the cap-and-trade program and expansive new regulatory regime will hamper California’s economic recovery.”

Have America's politicians gone mad?

“The debate over health care reform has been messy and often chaotic, but here we are a year later and Barack Obama and his radical agenda might yet win,” writes *Washington Times* editor emeritus Wesley Pruden. “If it does, he will have put in place the structure for taking over everything else.”

The government caused the health care crisis and now is claiming it can solve it by taking over the health care industry.

“Though the two issues may seem utterly unrelated, they do have this in common – both health care and higher education are realms of American life in which government has undermined the operation of market forces and caused artificially high prices,” writes columnist Mona Charen. “These are two arenas in which the Democrats now propose to do exactly the wrong thing. Their reform reinforces old errors and will infinitely compound the problem of rising prices.”

So, why can't the liberals accept fiscal responsibility?

“In his book *Dreams From My Father*, Obama gives the distinct impression that his gifts are too great for the smallness of our political stage,” writes *Forbes* magazine columnist Shikha Dalmia. “He regrets not having been born during the civil rights era when the grandness of the cause would have measured up to the grandness of his ambition. He is in search of something big that will allow him to make his mark on the world as Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King did. Hence, the defeat of ObamaCare would not just be par for the course in the rough-and-tumble world of politics for him. It would be sign of his ordinariness, his mortality, and that, to him, is unendurable.”

So, are we dealing with an immense ego?

Or is it something far more sinister? Is he trying to sabotage America so that he can lead a world government that will rise out of the ashes of global depression?

“It is time to cast aside all remaining doubt,” writes former White House staff economist and budget analyst Jim Simpson. “President Obama is not trying to lead America forward to recovery, prosperity and strength. Quite the opposite, in fact.”

He says Obama is following the extremist Cloward-Piven Strategy for destroying our government.

Columnist David Horowitz describes Cloward-Piven as: “The strategy of forcing political change through orchestrated crisis. The ‘Cloward-Piven Strategy’ seeks to hasten the fall of capitalism by overloading the government bureaucracy with a flood of impossible demands, thus pushing society into crisis and economic collapse.”

Richard Cloward and Frances Fox Piven were two lifelong members of Democratic Socialists of America. They taught sociology at Columbia University together, then Piven went on to the City University of New York.

In a May 1966 *Nation* magazine article titled “The Weight of the Poor,” the two outlined their strategy, proposing to use grassroots radical organizations to push ever more strident demands for public services at all levels of government.

“The result, they predicted, would be ‘a profound financial and political crisis’ that would unleash ‘powerful forces ... for major economic reform at the national level,’” writes Simpson.

“They implemented the strategy by creating a succession of radical organizations, most notable among them the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), with the help of veteran organizer Wade Rathke. Their crowning achievement was the ‘Motor Voter’ act, signed into law by Bill Clinton in 1993 with Cloward and Piven standing behind him.

“As we now know, ACORN was one of the chief drivers of high-risk mortgage lending that eventually led to the financial crisis. But the Motor Voter law was another component of the strategy. It created vast vulnerabilities in our electoral system, which ACORN then exploited.

“ACORN’s vote registration scandals throughout the U.S. are predictable fallout.

“The Motor Voter law has also been used to open another vulnerability in the system: the registration of vast numbers of illegal aliens, who then reliably vote Democrat. Herein lies the real reason Democrats are so anxious for open borders.

A crisis is a terrible thing to waste

“It should be clear to anyone with a mind and two eyes that this president and this Congress do not have our interests at heart,” writes Simpson. “They are implementing this strategy on an unprecedented scale by flooding America with a tidal wave of poisonous initiatives, orders, regulations, and laws. As Rahm Emmanuel said, ‘A crisis is a terrible thing to waste.’

“The real goal of ‘health care’ legislation, the real goal of ‘cap-and-trade,’ and the real goal of the ‘stimulus’ is to rip the guts out of our private economy and transfer wide swaths of it over to the government to control.

“Do not be deluded by the propaganda,” writes Simpson. “These initiatives are vehicles for change. They are not goals in and of themselves except in their ability to deliver power. They will make matters much worse, for that is their design.

“This time, in addition to overwhelming the government with demands for services, Obama and the Democrats are overwhelming political opposition to their plans with a flood of apocalyptic legislation. Their ultimate goal is to leave us so discouraged, demoralized, and exhausted that we throw our hands up in defeat. As Barney Frank said, ‘the middle class will be too distracted to fight.’

“These people are our enemies,” warns Simpson. “They don’t use guns, yet, but they are just as dangerous, determined, and duplicitous as the Communists we faced in the Cold War, Korea, Vietnam, and the Nazis we faced in World War II.

“It is time we fully internalized and digested this fact, with all its ugly ramifications. These people have violated countless laws and could be prosecuted, had we the political power. Not only are their policies unconstitutional, but deliberately so – the goal being to make the Constitution irrelevant.

“Their spending is off the charts and will drive us into hyperinflation, but it could be rescinded, had we the political power. These policies are toxic, but they could be stopped and reversed, had we the political power.

“Their ideologies are poisonous, but they could be exposed for what they are, with long jail sentences as an object lesson, had we the political power.

“Every single citizen who cares about this country should be spending every minute of his or her spare time lobbying, organizing, writing, and planning,” writes Simpson. “Fight every initiative they launch. It is all destructive. If we are to root out this evil, it is critical that in 2010 we elect competent, principled leaders willing to defend our Constitution and our country. Otherwise, the malevolent cabal that occupies the government today will become too entrenched.”

‘After that, all bets are off’

“Obama is imposing a leftist revolution,” writes Jeffrey T. Kuhner. “Since coming to office, he has behaved without any constitutional restraints. The power of the federal government has

exploded. He has de facto nationalized key sectors of American life – the big banks, financial institutions, the automakers, large tracts of energy-rich land from Montana to New Mexico.”

Kuhner is the daily host of ‘The Kuhner Show’ on Washington-area radio station WTNT, a columnist at the *Washington Times* and president of the Edmund Burke Institute, a Washington think tank.

He says Obama’s “cap-and-trade proposal, along with a newly empowered Environmental Protection Agency, seeks to impose massive new taxes and regulations upon industry. It is a form of green socialism: Much of the economy would fall under a command-and-control bureaucratic corporatist state. Obama even wants the government to take over student loans.

“Yet his primary goal has always been to gobble up the health care system,” writes Kuhner. “The most troubling aspect of the ObamaCare debate, however, is not the measure’s sweeping and radical aims – the transformation of one-sixth of the U.S. economy, crippling tax increases, higher premiums, state-sanctioned rationing, longer waiting lines, the erosion of the quality of medical care and the creation of a huge, permanent administrative bureaucracy. Rather, the most alarming aspect is the lengths to which the Democrats are willing to go to achieve their progressive, anticapitalist agenda.”

“Obamacare is opposed by nearly two-thirds of the public, more than 60 percent of independents and almost all Republicans and conservatives. It has badly fractured the country, dangerously polarizing it along ideological and racial lines. Even a majority of Democrats in the House are deeply reluctant to support it.

“Numerous states – from Idaho to Virginia to Texas – have said they will sue the federal government should ObamaCare become law. They will declare themselves exempt from its provisions, tying up the legislation in the courts for years to come.”

So, why would Obama be willing to sacrifice everything for the health-care takeover?

Because he believes once enacted, it can never be repealed, much like Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Millions depend on those programs now – and pulling the plug on them would be political suicide. Thus, he intends to saddle America with a new vast entitlement program – that cannot be undone.

“Obama is willing to devour his presidency, his party’s congressional majority and – most disturbing – our democratic institutional safeguards to enact it,” writes Kuhner. “He is a reckless ideologue who is willing to sacrifice the country’s stability in pursuit of a socialist utopia.

“In other words, Obama knows that he is taking America down the drain. He knows that riots in the street are next. And that’s exactly what he wants.”

And he’s not done, writes columnist Joseph Klein.

“Ohio Congressman Dennis Kucinich, who flipped his vote from ‘no’ to ‘yes’ after his ride with President Obama on Air Force One, admitted on Fox & Friends what we suspected all along.

“If the current version of Obamacare passes, an even more radical Obamacare II lies ahead. Kucinich said that he received an endorsement from Obama of his wish list for more changes, which happens to include a ‘robust’ public option.”

“This is typical of how the Progressive movement operates, as Glenn Beck has repeatedly pointed out on his show. And it fits in with Obama’s own declared intention to get a foot in the door with phase 1 of universal health care, and then march on toward a single payer solution akin to Canada’s model.”

Back during his presidential campaign, notes Klein, Obama said that if he were designing a system from scratch he would probably move more in the direction of a single-payer plan.

“Obama knows that he can’t get to where he wants all in one fell swoop. So his strategy – presumably shared with Kucinich on Air Force One – is to lead us unenlightened Americans slowly by the hand towards the Progressives’ Nirvana:

“It is my belief that not just politically but also economically, it’s better for us to start getting a system in place,” said Obama, “a universal health care system signed into law by the end of my first term as president and build off that system to further – to make it more rational – by the way, Canada did not start off immediately with a single-payer system. They had a similar transition step. Transitioning a system is a very difficult and costly and lengthy enterprise. It’s not like you could turn on a switch and you go from one system to another.”

“Obama didn’t just buy Kucinich’s vote with a ride on Air Force One and some ego-stroking,” writes Klein. “Obama no doubt confirmed in private, perhaps while munching peanuts on Air Force One, what he was intending to do all along. And it matches Kucinich’s own vision of a government-run single-payer health care system.

“While not quite coming out and admitting the coming drive for the public option and a single-payer model in so many words, Kucinich said on Fox & Friends that he got the assurances he needed from Obama to flip his vote from a firm ‘no’ to an enthusiastic ‘yes.’

“I have written this post to explain why President Obama is so desperate to pass health care legislation, seemingly regardless of the cost to the Democratic Party.

“The reality is that President Obama owes his success and his hold on power more to three Marxist groups than he does to the Democrats,” asserts Klein. “The three organizations, Communist Party USA, Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism and Democratic Socialists of America, all worked with Barack Obama for years and helped get him elected.”

Now they want payback

“All three organizations have campaigned hard for ‘socialized’ or ‘Single Payer’ health care. They want Obama to pass a bill, any bill, so that they can then ratchet up the pressure until the government has complete control of the health sector.

“Why? Because these people figure that if government controls health care, it will lock socially conservative American workers into supporting their Democratic Party allies indefinitely.

“Britain after World War II is their model. While Winston Churchill was the hero of the hour, in 1946 he was dumped in a landslide in favor of Labor Party leader Clement Attlee, on the promise of a massively increased welfare state and a socialized National Health Service.

“Leading Communist Party USA theorist Norman Markowitz put it this way in a November 2008 article in *Political Affairs*, entitled Obama’s Mandate for Change: ‘A “single payer” national health system, known as “socialized medicine” in the rest of the developed world – should be an essential part of the change that the core constituencies which elected Obama desperately need. Britain serves as an important political lesson for strategists. After the Labor Party established the National Health Service after World War II, supposedly conservative workers and low-income people under religious and other influences who tended to support the Conservatives were much more likely to vote for the Labor Party when health care, social welfare, education and pro-working class policies were enacted by labor-supported governments.’”

In other words, as the British became dependent on the government, they were less likely to vote for the Conservatives. So, what is going on?

“Whether they are called Democrats, Socialists, Marxists or Progressives, the current leadership in Washington has but one goal: control,” writes author Henry Lamp. “The current leadership has demonstrated its belief that government must control virtually every facet of the economy, of politics, and the life of every citizen.

“Since the turn of the 20th century, progressives have championed the idea of universal health care delivered by government. No other program touches so many lives with such absolute control as does the delivery of health care.”

Whim of the feds becomes law

“When government is in control, it is government that decides what services and procedures will be provided, to whom, and when. When government is in control, it is government that decides how much doctors and nurses will be paid, how much hospitals will be paid and how much will be paid for drugs.

“People who have been disappointed by the brick wall an insurance company can build will not believe the impenetrable barrier that government can build when a bureaucracy is in control. In a free market, there is always another insurance company; when government is in control, there is no alternative.

“Government control doesn’t end with health care. The feds are taking control over student loans.

“Pushed by progressive, the USDA tried for years to impose a National Animal Identification System which sought to require every person who owned even one of any of 29 species of livestock animals to register his premises – with GPS coordinates – in a federal database, tag every animal owned with a government-issued number and report to the government within 24 hours every time an animal left the registered premises for any reason.

“Citizen pushback has forced the USDA to back up and take a different approach. Now it appears that the leadership is formulating the same kind of controls for everyone who produces any kind of food, as well as livestock owners. There is just no end to the ways this progressive philosophy seeks to quash freedom in order to control the people.”

A national ID care ... again

“Despite having been rejected in the past, promoters of the ‘National ID Card’ are at it again. These folks are hell-bent on forcing every American to have a government-issued identification card that contains whatever information the government decides you must make available to whoever swipes your card.

“It continues to worsen. The feds have promoted Comprehensive Planning laws for states to enact. Local communities have embraced these plans as evidence of their progressive thinking – and to get billions in federal ‘Sustainable Development’ grants. These plans have no appreciation for individual freedom or private property rights. Some cities dictate the color each home must be painted; others dictate the length and species of lawn grass. Most counties now have an ‘Urban Boundary Zone’ beyond which municipal services are not available. This destroys property values outside the zone and inflates the value of property inside the zone. It is government control instead of a free market.

“It’s almost as if the U.S. Constitution did not exist. The congressional powers enumerated in Article 1, Section 8, have, for all practical purposes, been erased. The 4th Amendment that guarantees security from government without a warrant is routinely ignored. The 10th Amendment that reserves all powers not granted to the federal government to the states and to the people – has been rendered meaningless.

“Unless this entire crowd of progressive control-freaks is booted well beyond the D.C. Beltway in the next election, America will continue to spiral downward, deeper into a government-controlled hell-hole.”

But what happens when the money runs out?

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, free health care fell into a sort of limbo – with the new government of the Russian Federation officially providing health care, but in reality not having any funds to provide anything beyond bare basics.

Russian President Vladimir Putin doubled spending on health care, but complaints were rampant about crumbling infrastructure, poor quality of medical services and overall mismanagement. Understaffed hospitals, inadequate equipment and widespread corruption have, in fact, left millions of Russians without quality health care.

“Depending on local economic conditions, health care quality varies considerably among Russia’s 88 administrative regions,” writes Rina Shah in the June 2008 edition of *Health Care News*. “Many state-run hospitals, particularly in remote areas, do not have hot water, and some do not have running water at all. Even the most basic medicines are often in limited supply.”

“The Russian ‘free health care for all’ system is nothing of the sort,” said Jeff Emanuel, research fellow for health care policy at the Heartland Institute. “Instead, it is simply another program built on governmental taking of taxpayer funds and mismanagement of the services it promises to provide. “The result is millions of people pay into the system through their taxes, but when they need care they are stranded without the basic medical services their taxes are paying for.”

The Russian Academy of Sciences’ Open Health Institute has estimated rampant corruption siphons off as much as 35 percent of the money spent on health care nationwide annually. Low wages are another problem. Yearly salaries of physicians average \$5,160 to \$6,120, while nurses average \$2,760 to \$3,780. This often results in underpaid physicians accepting bribes for higher-quality care.”

What about other countries where the government overextended itself and had to shut down entitlements?

In Argentina, about a third of citizens receive health care through the nation’s labor unions. The wealthy pay for their own care and a public health system serves those not covered by the unions or private insurance.

“Argentina’s public system,” writes Armando Barrientos, “exhibits serious structural deterioration and managerial inefficiency, a high degree of administrative centralization at the provincial level, rigidity in its staffing structure and labor relationships, no adequate system of incentives, inadequate information systems on which to base decision-making and control, serious deficits in facilities and equipment maintenance, and a system of management ill-suited to its size.”

What about China?

“China is undertaking a reform on its health care system,” reports the UN’s World Health Organization. “The New Rural Cooperative Medical Care System, is a 2005 initiative to overhaul the healthcare system, particularly intended to make it more affordable for the rural poor. The system is tiered, depending on the location.”

If patients go to a small hospital or clinic in their local town, the Chinese government pays 70-80 percent of the bill. If they go to a county one, the percentage of the cost being covered falls to about 60 percent. If they need specialist help in a large modern city hospital, they have to bear most of the cost themselves.

What about the Greeks, who are rioting in the streets, protesting their country's bankruptcy?

"In theory, there are no deductible or copayments," writes Dr. Jason Shafrin on the Internet website Healthcare Economist. "In reality, the need to make informal payments to providers means that most patients incur significant out of pocket expenses."

The term "informal payments" is another way of saying "under-the-table" fees or "bribes."

"In fact, one estimate claimed that informal out-of-pocket payments make up 42 percent of healthcare expenditures," writes Shafrin. "Hospital administrators are appointed not based on merit, but instead based on their political affiliation.

"Because of this, many hospitals suffer from poor quality. Pay for doctors and nurses is fairly low and thus there are severe staffing shortages.

"Wait times for medical care are very long in Greece. This is likely due to the provider shortages caused by low reimbursement rates. There is a six month wait for some surgeries and the wait for appointments with specialists can be as long as 150 days. Simple blood tests often take a month.

"There is significant corruption and inequality in the Greek system. For instance, some funds, known as 'noble funds' have more extensive benefits and lower worker contributions.

"The reason for this is that strong worker unions are able to use their political clout to get a better deal for their workers at the expense of workers in other industries.

"Also, most doctors demand under the table payments in order to see patients or if patients want higher quality care."

Is this the America we can all look forward to?

"The problem facing the developed world isn't so very difficult to figure out," writes columnist Mark Steyn. "We're living beyond not just our means but everybody's means. In the United States, Andrew Biggs of the American Enterprise Institute calculates that if the federal government were to increase every single tax by 30 per cent it would be enough to balance the books – in 25 years. Except that it wouldn't. Because if you raised taxes by 30 per cent, government would spend even more than it already does, on the grounds that the citizenry needed more social programs and entitlements to compensate for their sudden reduction in disposable income.

"Nobody is going to raise U.S. taxes by 30 per cent – or at least not in one fell swoop, not when American businesses already labor under the highest corporate tax rates in the free world. Washington's approach to the runaway train is to shovel more coal in, on the grounds that the precipice is most likely further away than it looks.

"The state spends too much. It hires too many people on whom it lavishes too many benefits. Those foolish enough to remain in the private sector have to pay for the benefits of the public sector through debt.

"In Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland, government spending accounts for between 73 and 78 per cent of the economy, which is about as high as you can get without embracing full-scale Sovietization. In the English city of Newcastle, three-quarters of the working population are employed by the government."

And what does the public get for its money?

"Americans would do well to ponder a recent admission by a former British minister in the Blair government," writes Theodore Dalrymple in *City Journal*. "On March 2, the *Guardian* reported that the ex-minister, now Lord Warner, said that while spending on Britain's National

Health Service had increased by 60 percent under the Labor government, its output had decreased by 4 percent.

“The ex-minister admitted that most of the extra money – which by now must equal a decent proportion of the total national debt – had been simply wasted. But his explanation for this state of affairs was superficial and self-exculpating, to say the least. He said that the NHS received more money than it knew what to do with because of managerial inexperience. “It was like giving a starving man foie gras and caviar,” he said.

“The service has taken on 400,000 new staff members, one-fifth of all new jobs created in Britain during the period. However, continuity of medical care has been all but extinguished. Nobody now expects to see the same doctor on successive occasions, in the hospital or anywhere else.

“As it happens, the NHS knew exactly what to do with the money: give it to its staff, new and old.

“British doctors, for example, are now the second-highest-paid in the world, though not necessarily the happiest.

“They have accepted the money on condition that they also accept – as quietly as mice – increasing government interference in their work. When you go to a family doctor in Britain, he is more likely to do what the government thinks he ought to do and will pay him a bonus for doing than what he thinks is right.”

British physicians are ever more numerous and they naturally vote for their own providers, the politicians.

“Thus the NHS has become an enormously expensive method of ballot-stuffing,” writes Dr. Dalrymple. “Personally, I would rather have outright electoral fraud. It would be less expensive and slightly more honest.

“Just before the last election, the chief executive of one of the hospitals in which I once worked was overheard saying, ‘My job is to make sure that the government is reelected.’

“The government’s job, in turn, was to make sure that she remained chief executive. She also explained that the hospital could expect no increase in its government funding, unlike other hospitals – because it was located in an area in which most people voted for the government anyway.”

“In economic terms, I’m not sure you can even call this ‘Keynesian,’” writes Steyn of the boom in government employees in the U.K., “since John Maynard of that ilk would surely be surprised at the claims on the public purse in the name of ‘stimulus.’

“To Keynes, a government treasury was not a family purse: the state, unlike the household, could go into debt to ‘invest.’ Now, the family purse has caught up: governments and individuals alike borrow extravagantly – and consume rather than invest in any meaningful sense.

“This is a grand time to be a government worker. You know that ‘economic downturn’ you hear so much about? It goes away if you work for the government! Indeed, you get an economic upturn.

USA Today reports that at the start of the ‘downturn’ the U.S. Department of Transportation had just one employee earning more than \$170,000 per year. Eighteen months later, it has 1,690. The new class war in the Western world is between ‘public servants’ and the rest of us.

“In Greece, the bloated public service has leached so much out of the economy that they’ve run out of Greeks to stick it to, and require an intervention by the European Union.

“Likewise,” continues Steyn, “the debauched public sector of California is pinning its hopes on federal largesse. At a certain level, American public opinion understands this. It’s why

Obama has fallen so far so fast. Fourteen months ago, it seemed like a smart move to make 'trillion' a routine part of the Washington lexicon. Now all its many citations do is remind even the most innumerate that the Democrat project is a crock, and the word itself is merely shorthand for 'money we don't have and will never have.'

"This isn't 'climate change,' dependent on this or that predictive model. This is the certainty of disaster. And yet the only certainty is that Western governments will continue to grow the state at the expense of the market: they will create more regulations requiring more agencies with more expensively paid public-service union employees.

"Not all of this growth will be intentional; much of it will happen under various desultory hiring and wage 'freezes.' But, because government is immune to normal pressures, unless you're actively shrinking it, it always grows.

"In *The Time Machine* by H. G. Wells, a fellow in late Victorian England saddles up the eponymous contraption, propels himself forward and finds himself in a world where humanity has divided into a small, soft, passive, decadent elite, the Eloi, among whom one can barely tell the boys from the girls, and a dark, feral, subterranean underclass, the Morlocks.

"This is supposedly Britain in the year 802,701 AD. That's the only thing Wells got wrong: the date.

"If he'd set his time machine to zip forward a mere hundred years or so to the early 21st century, he'd have been bang on target.

"The historian Victor Davis Hanson thinks Wells's tale sums up his fellow Californians, too. The new Eloi expect to be able to enjoy all the benefits of an advanced prosperous society while erecting a regime of sentimentalized regulation that will make its continuation impossible.

"The new Morlocks demand video games and other diversions they regard as their birthright but are all but incapable of making any contribution to the kind of society required to produce them. As for Canada, though not yet in advanced state of decay, those debt-to-income figures are following the same path. At the dawn of the Reagan era, America was the world's largest creditor nation and its citizens had a 10 per cent savings rate. Not today.

"Swimming into view come rising powers – India, Brazil, China and others, all with problems of their own, but not wedded to the proposition that great nations can squander both their inheritance and their children's future without cost.

"Decline is a choice. The selfish pampered profligates of the postwar West made theirs, and for good measure and to ward off the day of reckoning consigned their kids and grandkids to it, too.

"It would seem to me unlikely that the next generation will be willing or so easily diverted by electronic novelties to reduce themselves to serfs in a vain attempt to sustain an unsustainable system.

"So something will happen.

"Greek riots?"