

Redistributing Wealth – Around the World

It is common today to hear about the disparity of income in America. Supposedly, the rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer, and the middle class is shrinking. I won't question these premises because they are so widely held that they are considered facts.

In addition, many people believe that the rich have accumulated their wealth at the expense of the poor and the middle class. Because they exploited their workers and the system, someone needs to stop and reverse these actions.

Naturally, the people turn to the government. If the capitalist system cannot produce equal results, if it allows for few to profit at the expense of the masses, and if in doing so, it threatens the core of our civilization and our planet, then it is the responsibility of the government to intervene and right this wrong.

Without jailing the rich, or confiscating all of their money, the most acceptable solution to this injustice is to raise their taxes. By legally taking more of their money, the government increases its revenue, allowing it to redistribute the money in a more equitable fashion. Robin Hood and his Merry Men could not do it any better.

Now, some Americans consider themselves "citizens of the world." There is truth to this of course, since, technically the borders that separate countries can be arbitrary, historical, and disputable. And if we are our brother's keeper, that includes our brothers on the other side of that boundary. Still, don't expect Lee Greenwood to be singing, "Because I'm Proud to be an Earthling," anytime soon.

Most of the world would agree with many Americans – that there is an inequitable distribution of wealth, resources, and power. And they would agree that some are gaining wealth through the exploitation of the poor. They would further agree that someone or something should do something about this. Since this dispute involves the entire world, then the only governing body that could naturally intervene would be the United Nations.

There are many ways to determine the wealth of a country. Gross Domestic Product is arguably the most common one. Personally, I prefer annual pounds of chocolate consumed per person – a truer indicator of wealth, but no matter. Whatever equation the United Nations uses to determine wealth, I can guarantee you that the United States will be on the top of the list (with the British right behind us). Even our own politicians complain that we consume far too much energy and

resources. Consequently, we are not just wealthy, but stupid – for electing politicians that side with the rest of the world against us.

In the eyes of the world, we are a rich bully, who exploits the world resources at the expense of others – all while not paying our fair share. While countries languish in civil war and abject poverty, our poor possess televisions, the internet, have hot and cold running water, roofs over their heads, and never have to go very far for a meal – or by the looks of most Americans – a cheap buffet.

So if there is anyone that should justifiably be taxed by the rest of the world, it is America. A vote in the United Nations, would undoubtedly demand taxes for our excessive, profligate lifestyle.

How should we pay this tax? A national sales tax? Personal income taxes? What about an Internet tax? Or how about a carbon tax on people who exhale large amounts of carbon dioxide, which “pollutes” the atmosphere? You know, kill two birds with one stone.

America’s economy is in the trillions of dollars, so you can bet that the poor countries would demand hundreds of billions of dollars every year.

And why not?

We argue that inequitable wealth distribution in America necessitates additional taxes on the wealthy. They would argue that inequitable wealth distribution in the world necessitates taxes on America. Even Robin Hood would agree with them. And his poor Merry Men could finally afford themselves some wives and stay out of mischief.

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