

## Optimizing The Obama Shift

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After eight years of holding one's breath topped with global financial meltdown, hope for the shift from the disaster of the Bush years to the potential for the Obama years has run high among futurists worldwide. At the same time this hope seesaws with the fear Obama and team will fall short.

A new scientific measure of global health and well-being may provide a way to weight the global teeter totter on the up side and lighten the down side (2007)<sup>1</sup>. Its roots go back over 150 years to the voyage of the Beagle of Darwinian fame (Darwin, 1839; 1989). Seldom remembered now, the actual purpose for the Beagle was the global sounding of safe harbors, hence the name for the new measure, the Global Sounding. The new measure also draws on my reconstruction of Darwin's "lost theory" (in which Darwin repeatedly insisted that *moral sensitivity*, rather than "survival of the fittest," is the primary drive for human evolution) (Loye, 2007b) and the advanced science of many fields both bearing on the development of futures studies and corroborating the "lost" Darwin.<sup>2</sup> Drawing on these sources, the Global Sounding is designed to show whether we are moving ahead, being checked in place, or driven backward on fifteen basic indicators. Of these indicators, the new measure's basic indicator for economic evolution is a horribly relevant eye-opener.

To see where the catastrophic multi-trillion dollar global loss of money and jobs fits into a new picture for evolution, here's a quick guide to the accompanying matrix for the Global Sounding (see Table 1).

The first column, Levels of Evolution, shows the Global Sounding structure for fifteen high impact levels of evolution. Next come positive indicators of evolutionary *progression*. Next, negative indicators of evolutionary *regression*. Then, in the last column—from cosmic and biological to moral and spiritual evolution—can be seen the story of the past eight years of American policies impacting the health, wealth, and sanity of the rest of our world.

In this level by level comparison of positive with negative indicators, can be seen what historians will likely eventually conclude were the results of prevailing policies for the Bush years.

The current most dramatic case in point is level eight: economic evolution. Here, in a single track for indicators at this level, can be seen much of the story of why everything suddenly went from the blithe political and financial leadership assurance of a "fundamentally sound economy" to world headlines of global meltdown.

The Global Sounding was developed only four years ago after three decades of multidisciplinary and multinational research bearing on all fifteen levels.<sup>3</sup> Yet here is a new measure that not only could have predicted what has happened to us on the money and jobs front worldwide. It con-

Table 1.  
*The global sounding*

**The Global Sounding**

Levels of evolution	Indicators of progression	Indicators of regression	Regressive Bush years policies
<b>Cosmic</b>	Sustainability of complex life forms	Environmental devastation	Opposition to environmental action and global concern
<b>Chemical</b>	Gaia Hypothesis/ symbiosis	Environmental devastation	Opposition to environmental action and global concern
<b>Biological</b>	Health and Longevity	Environmental devastation	Opposition to environmental action and global concern
<b>BRAIN</b>	<b>Parental love and nutrition</b>	<b>Lack of love and nutrition</b>	<b>Minimize governmental support</b>
<b>Psychological</b>	Self-actualizing	Lack of fulfillment	Maximize defense, minimize growth
<b>[Cultural]</b>	High priority for arts	Low priority for arts	Minimize support for arts
<b>Social</b>	Freedom and equality	Control and inequality	Maximize control and inequality
Levels of evolution	Indicators of progression	Indicators of regression	Regressive Bush years policies
<b>Economic</b>	Balanced private/public	Imbalanced private/public	Maximize imbalance thru privatization
<b>Political</b>	Democracy	Authoritarianism	Oligarchic probe toward authoritarianism
<b>Educational</b>	Capacity for learning and independent thinking	Curtailing of facilities for learning and independent thinking	Radical de-escalation for progressive education
<b>Technological</b>	Emphasis on technologies of actualization	Emphasis on technologies of destruction	Radical escalation for the military
<b>Moral</b>	Living by the Golden Rule	Power of greed and corruption	Living by the Brass Rule
<b>Spiritual</b>	Sense of identity with humanity and greater being	Slavery to materiality	Celebration of absolute power of wealth
<b>Consciousness</b>	Cognitive, affective, and conative scope	Curtailing of scope of mind	Devaluing scope of mind
<b>ACTION</b>	Encouragement of progressive social action	Repression of progressive social action	Encouragement of <i>regressive</i> social action

From *Bankrolling Evolution: A Program for a President and Measuring Evolution: A Leadership Guide to the Health and Wealth of Nations*, by David Loye. Benjamin Franklin Press, 2007. © David Loye 2007.

tains a hopeful set of scientifically-grounded guidelines for policy and action to get us out of the hole and onto the new level of living all indicators tell us we must gain within the 21<sup>st</sup> century if we are to end what in recent years has become a relentless march toward extinction.

Under Indicators of Progression is what leading economists and others have seen as a basic formula for the healthy economy. Pointing to the high productivity and quality of life for Scandinavian countries, many find an answer lies in the balancing of the initiative of private industry with governmental regulation to defend the public interest.

For over nearly forty years this was an underlying position for economist John Kenneth Galbraith in six books remarkably predictive of what has happened in our time.<sup>4</sup> Nobel Laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz hammers at this basic need for balance (Stiglitz, 2006). Currently, in an update for Adam Smith, in *The Real Wealth of Nations*, cultural evolution theorist and futurist Riane Eisler expands the picture in an analysis of the dynamics of domination versus partnership systems.<sup>5</sup>

What opened the way to disaster? Under Indicators of Regression can be seen what spread like a virus from America throughout the rest of the world. There, in few words, can be seen the blow to evolutionary sanity that during the Bush years came from an all out holy war to privatize everything and shrink governmental regulation to where, in American corporate strategist Grover Norquist's memorable image, it could be "drowned in a bathtub."

Given this outcome for the one-two financial punch of the Bush years, as we stagger with the knock down facing a new American president and Congress, what can be done about it?

Under the Indicators of Progression can be seen what not only appears to be evolution's message of what's best for us. In the wake of the worldwide jolt to what Galbraith called "the conventional wisdom" can be seen the new gospel for the rush by a tardy horde of converts to reestablish a lawful balance between the private and the public good.

And what of the rest of the Global Sounding's levels for evolution? What can they tell us? In the last column, Regressive Policies, down level after level, can be seen the story of what happens when fear and ignorance is manipulated by an evolutionary pathological leadership to evolutionary pathological ends.<sup>6</sup> Here is the global wound calling for the healing of mind, heart and soul that now confronts Obama, and team, and all the rest of us.

A measure of the stature and goal of the science behind this new measure is the fact that what eventually became the Global Sounding began with a secret meeting behind the Iron Curtain convened by general evolution theorist and futurist Ervin Laszlo in Budapest during the Cold War years.<sup>7</sup> I was among a handful of scientists Laszlo brought together from both sides of the Curtain in 1984. The task Laszlo put before us was to see if out of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century explosion of new evolution theories bearing on our present and future (for example, chaos, and later complexity, and self-organizing theory), we might develop a "next step" action-oriented theory of evolution to free science and society from the disastrous fixation on the past and the global mindset of "survival of the fittest" Darwinism then driving the U.S. and Russia toward mutual nuclear annihilation.

Physicists, biologists, psychologists, sociologists, political scientists, management scientists, futurists and others from America, Europe and Asia, generally meeting in Europe—out of this mix emerged our formation of the General Evolution Research Group, our journal *World Futures: The Journal of General Evolution*, and the research base for the Global Sounding. The problems facing us, it became evident, could only be solved by going beyond the old 20<sup>th</sup> century fixation mainly on biology to identify what moves us ahead, checks us in place, or drives us backward at all the levels for planetary and human evolution. Drawing on this inspiring data base, the research for my six book Darwin Anniversary Cycle,<sup>8</sup> and my background in psychology, sociology, futures studies and measurement development,<sup>9</sup> I designed the Global Sounding to do what I now believe it offers: A new way to help decision-makers in all fields help steer the Obama years to where progressive science in all fields shows we must go.

The tracks for psychological and moral evolution, for example (levels five and twelve), further show how the Global Sounding applies its grounding in multi-level science to the crucial tasks of our time.

Behind the positive and negative indicators for psychological evolution can be seen the liberating thrust for humanistic, transpersonal, and positive psychology—specifically, pioneering psychologist Abraham Maslow's concept of how we ideally evolve from a fear-based "defense," to a hope-driven "growth," to a morally and spiritually higher "metamotivational" level of evolution (Maslow, 1971). This track for progression versus regression again reveals the pathology of the Bush years: how blindly and relentlessly a leadership locked into the lower level "defense" drive of greed and the lust for power led to global economic meltdown. But well beyond that, in the drive level for *personal* evolution can be seen the thrust affecting practically all other levels for evolution.

Political evolution (level nine), for example, pits the progressive thrust of the "growth" and "metamotivational" drive toward "rule by the many" democracy against the regressive drive of ultra-conservatives locked into the "defense" motivation toward "rule by the few" oligarchy and authoritarianism.<sup>10</sup>

Most telling of all, however—bearing not only on economic debacle but breakdown at practically every other level, and indeed whether we are to have a future at all—is the primary concern that was Darwin's; of which he originally wrote in his private notebooks after the Beagle voyage and then an astounding 92 times in *The Descent of Man*: number twelve, moral evolution.

Why is it that late in 2008, as the presidents and experts of the nations rushed together to address the crisis of global financial meltdown, only a single voice raised this issue? Yet French president Nicholas Sarkozy's call for action to "bring ethics to financial capitalism" was a reflection not only of what Adam Smith originally focused on in *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.<sup>11</sup> It is what in our time economists Gunnar Myrdal (1963), Kenneth Boulding (1966), again John Kenneth Galbraith, and crusading futurist Hazel Henderson have hammered at—Henderson (2006) in her PBS television and internet program "Ethical Markets," and in the wake of the exposure of the corruption and collapse of Wall Street, her leadership of a bold move to form a new ethical stock exchange for pioneering companies for the green economy.

Within the matrix for the Global Sounding is the warning parable. Here again, in the indicators for moral evolution, is the old story for the history of our species on this planet of what happens when the Golden Rule of "do unto others as ye would have them do unto you" is swamped by the Brass Rule of "do it unto to others before they can do it unto you." (Loye, 2007c)

Can the Global Sounding show us how to heal the wounds of the past and out of the rare new opportunity of the Obama years gain the better future that an explosion of new global health and wellbeing measures show us the world yearns for? (Loye, 2007a)

It can if, in this year of the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin, evolution can be seen as more than just something for passing a test in school, or entertainment for contentious scholars, or to fill the slot for the tired old "Evolutionists versus Creationists" stories that for over a century have been about all our hopelessly behind-times mainstream media can find a place for. In government, in business, in religion and every other area of our lives, the Global Sounding can help gain the better future if at last it's recognized that evolution provides the one sure overriding standard by which who we are, where we're headed, who we can be, and what can be done about it can best be judged.

To reaffirm the simple structure for its potential power: the Global Sounding is designed to help us gain the better future by offering a new way of tracking whether, along any one or all fifteen levels, we are being driven ahead, checked in place, or driven backward in evolution.

It can easily be put to use with basic rating forms I've designed for assessing the potential evolutionary impact of personal, business, and governmental investment in policies, projects, and programs during the Obama years. Essentially, it's just a matter of focusing on one's target policy or action and in terms of progressive versus regressive indicators asking three questions. Will this policy or action possibly advance evolution? Will it merely check us in place? Or could it actually drive us backward—as in the long obvious case of the annual trillion-dollar global investment in military overkill, in which America leads all the rest?

Worldwide a huge platter of hope has been raised by expectation for the Obama years. The grim reality, however, is that this platter must now draw on the depleted cupboard that the wars, corruption, and profligate spending of the Bush years have left behind. Foreshadowed by the multibillion dollar bailout frenzy, what faces the Obama administration, Congress, and the American tax payer is a firestorm of proposals—backed by both good and bad special interests—over which hordes of the needy and the greedy will fight for every morsel.

It is here I believe the Global Sounding could make a significant national and transnational contribution. Grounded in the relatively new fields of evolutionary systems science and futures studies, this new fifteen-level measure for evaluation and action provides a way of evaluating all proposals to decide where money can be spent to best effect.

Here is a measure that anyone of intelligence can use to shape their investment, and strengthen their voice, in the choice of the lost prohuman Darwinian future we want, rather than the subhuman and inhuman Darwinian future we'll otherwise be saddled with.

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## Notes

1. See Loye, David. (2007). *Bankrolling Evolution: A Program for a President*, and *Measuring Evolution: A Leadership Guide to the Health and Wealth of Nations*. Carmel, CA: Benjamin Franklin Press.
2. For multilevel work BY members of the General Evolution Research Group spanning all fifteen levels for evolution, see David Loye, (Ed.) (2004). *The Great Adventure: Toward a Fully Human Theory of Evolution*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press. More generally, see the past 30 years of quarterly issues of our journal *World Futures: The Journal of General Evolution*.
3. See A Brief History of the General Evolution Research Group, in Loye, *The Great Adventure: Toward a Fully Human Theory of Evolution*, or online at The Darwin Project [www.thedarwinproject.com](http://www.thedarwinproject.com)
4. Though best known for *The Affluent Society* and *The New Industrial State*, in which the need for private-public balance are implicit, Galbraith's most direct statement is in *Economics and the Public Purpose* (Houghton Mifflin, 1973).
5. See, e.g., Eisler, Riane. (2008). *The Real Wealth of Nations*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler. Also also Galtung, Johan, and Sohail Inayatullah (Eds.) (1997). *Macrohistory and Macrohistorians*. Bridgeport, CT: Praeger.
6. See Loye, David. (2007). The Pathology of Leadership and The Pathology of Enablers and Followers in *Bankrolling Evolution: A Program for a President*. Carmel, CA: Benjamin Franklin Press.
7. Loye, David. (2007). *Darwin's Lost Theory*. Carmel, CA: Benjamin Franklin Press.
8. See Loye, David. (2007). *Darwin's Lost Theory*, *Bankrolling Evolution*, *Measuring Evolution*, and *Darwin on Love*, and (forthcoming) *The Derailing of Evolution* and *Telling the New Story*. Carmel, CA: Benjamin Franklin Press.
9. For psychology, see Loye, David. (1977). *The Leadership Passion: A Psychology of Ideology*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; for sociology, (2007) *The River and the Star: The Lost Story of the Great Explorers of the Better World*. Carmel, CA.: Benjamin Franklin Press; for futures studies, (1978). *The Knowable Future*. New York: Wiley. (1984) *The Sphinx and the Rainbow*. Boston: New Science Library. (2000) *An Arrow Through Chaos*. Rochester, VT: Park Street Press; and for measurement studies, (2007) *Measuring Evolution: A Leadership Guide to the Health and Wealth of Nations*. Carmel, CA: Benjamin Franklin Press.

10. Loye, David. (2007). *The river and the star and bankrolling evolution*. Carmel, CA: Benjamin Franklin Press.
11. Smith, Adam. (1759; 2004). *The theory of moral sentiments*. New York: Kessinger.

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