



The Canary in the Coal Mine: Trouble Ahead for America?

The canaries served to warn miners of danger until 1986 when the British government decided to replace them with modern electronic equipment, to the disappointment of the miners. But until that time, the canaries kept the miners safe, changes in their behavior warning of the coming of danger.



Today, in America, the canary in the political coal mine is panicking, and like the miners of old, we should take heed.

There's long been a background hiss about doom and gloom and impending demise coming from some of the deep recesses of the American body politic. These, prudent people have long ignored.

Something, however, seems to have changed. More sober voices that once were silent are now expressing grave concerns, and this is occurring on both sides of the left-right divide.

Consider, for instance, Steve Jobs. The late CEO of Apple, Jobs reportedly complained directly to President Obama about the way government impedes business in America.

The revelation comes from [Huffington Post](#), which acquired a copy of the forthcoming biography of Jobs from author Walter Isaacson. According to that report, Jobs told Obama, "You're headed for a one-term presidency," and then complained about oppressive regulation.

The *Huffington Post* noted that Jobs then "described the ease with which companies can build factories in China compared to the United States, where 'regulations and unnecessary costs' make it difficult for them." The *HuffPo* notes that the Apple CEO, a man with a long and deep interest in education, then "criticized America's education system, saying it was 'crippled by union work rules,' noted Isaacson. 'Until the teachers' unions were broken, there was almost no hope for education reform.' Jobs proposed allowing principals to hire and fire teachers based on merit, that schools stay open until 6 p.m. and that they be open 11 months a year."

Whatever the merits, or lack thereof, of Jobs' ideas for longer school sessions, it is noteworthy that this otherwise strong supporter of Obama, who offered his assistance in creating campaign ads for the President, felt it necessary to point out that big government is choking off the life of the American economy. In this respect, Jobs is a canary in the American coal mine.

And he's not alone. Judge Andrew Napolitano has long been a critic of big government, but he has recently come to a sobering conclusion. We think of America as the "home of the free," but we are not free at all.

"There is no human liberty, natural or constitutional, expressly guaranteed in the Constitution or traditionally viewed as belonging to all persons, that has not been nullified by government in America," Napolitano [said](#) on a recent episode of his "FreedomWatch" program. "We are deluding ourselves if we really think that the government thinks that the so-called guarantees of freedoms are truly guarantees. They are not. They have been tolerated by American governments unless and until the governments have felt threatened by them."



Written by [Dennis Behreandt](#) on October 25, 2011

New York Times best-selling author Bill Bonner likewise is warning that danger lies not far ahead. A generally sober analyst who has done much better than most at first predicting and then explaining our recent economic problems, Bonner sees now that the worst is yet to come.

"People are upset. They know something is wrong. But they don't know what," he writes in a [recent article](#) for his *Daily Reckoning* blog. This, he notes, creates conditions where increasing violence is likely, which in turn will cause a corresponding violent response from government. His prediction: revolution. He writes:

But here is our most audacious forecast yet: the US is headed for ruin and revolution. The revolution will almost certainly be put down, violently. But the ruin cannot be stopped.

Yes, dear reader, the empire is following its natural course ... with the zombies in control and the debt slaves whispering treason. It can't afford enough bread to keep the popolo minuto (the little people) happy. It will be forced to get tough on them. It is only a matter of time before the secret police round up the ringleaders and disappear them. Heck, the Obama government has already decided that it has the power to kill citizens without any due process of law. What's to stop it from killing lots of them?

Perhaps the most noteworthy of the recent warnings comes from the [Harvard Business Review](#). A high-brow mainstream business publication, *HBR* would not normally be expected to publish an article predicting doom and gloom, yet in its September issue, the publication ran an article entitled "Global Capitalism at Risk," written by professors Joseph L. Bower, Herman B. "Dutch" Leonard, and Lynne S. Paine.

They pull few punches. The professorial trio notes, "Market capitalism has proven to be a remarkable engine of wealth creation," but in the next 25 years, it faces "a violent ride, or worse, a serious breakdown in the system itself. That sounds dire, and it is."

The problems we face seem nearly overwhelming. The *HBR* authors write:

The threats to market capitalism are diverse. When the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen, when millions of have-nots migrate from poor countries to rich ones and wealthy nations respond with increasingly strident protectionism, when global financial systems are fragile and less than transparent, and when society's traditional protectors — business, industry, government, and international institutions — are unable to address these and other first-order problems, we have a recipe for disaster.

Such a simultaneous expression of concern for the future from across the political spectrum is arguably unprecedented over the last 40 years of American history.

The canary in the coal mine of American society and culture is warning of danger. The question is, what will we do about it?

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