The Dark Past Of The Bank For International Settlements

Although written by Patrick Wood in 2005, nothing has changed to the historical fact of the Bank for International Settlements. It has nefarious roots and is the tap-root of modern globalization.

Today, the BIS is getting headlines again because of its direction of central banks to go cashless. It is readily apparent that it has not lost its power and influence over the decades. For anyone wanting to understand how the world really works, this is a must-read paper. TN Editor

Created at Bretton Woods in 1944, the World Bank has been dominated by international bankers, members of the Council on Foreign Relations and later by the Trilateral Commission. Corruption and self-interest run amok as public funds are converted into private hands by the billions.

Introduction

According to The World Bank, it is,

> *"a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world. We are not a bank in the common sense. We are made up of two unique development institutions owned by 184 member countries—the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA). Each institution plays a different but supportive role in our mission of global poverty reduction and the improvement of living standards. The IBRD focuses on middle income and creditworthy poor countries, while IDA focuses on the poorest countries in the world. Together we provide low-interest loans, interest-free credit and grants to developing countries for education, health, infrastructure, communications and many other purposes."* 1

High-minded words like "our mission of global poverty reduction and the improvement of living standards" would lead the reader to believe that the World Bank is some benevolent and global welfare organization. Why is it then, that The World Bank joins the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization as organizations that people around the world just love to hate?

In reality, the World Bank carries its weight, along with the International Monetary Fund and the Bank for International Settlements, to forcibly integrate minor countries of the world into its own brand of capitalistic democracy.

World Bank Beginnings

A sibling of the IMF, the World Bank was born out of the U.N. Monetary and Financial Conference at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire in July, 1944. The original name given to the World Bank was the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and reflects its original mission: to rebuild Europe after the devastation of World War II. The name "World Bank" was not actually adopted until 1975.

Both the IBRD and the IMF were created as independent specialized agencies of the United Nations, of which they remain to this day.

The word "Development" in the IBRD name was rather insignificant at the time because most of the southern hemisphere was still under colonial rule, with each colonial master responsible for the business activities in their respective countries.

Note: It is argued by some that there was an original desire by banking elites to put an end to colonialism by restructuring investment and trade patterns in colonized countries. This paper will not deal with this issue, but it should be noted that this has been exactly what has happened, in many cases being aided by the operations of the World Bank and the IMF.

As a "reconstruction" bank, however, the World Bank was impotent. It ultimately loaned only $497(US) million for reconstruction projects. The Marshall Plan, by contrast, became the true engine of the reconstruction of Europe by loaning over $41(US) billion by 1953.

The primary architects of the World Bank were Harry Dexter White and John Maynard Keynes, both of whom are summarized Global Banking: The International Monetary Fund (see article for complete details) as follows:

> *"Such is the moral fiber and intellectual credentials of the creators of the IMF [and the World Bank]: One was an English ideologue economist with a markedly global bent, and the other a corrupt and high-ranking U.S. government official who was a top Soviet spy."*2

Structure of the World Bank

Today, the World Bank consists of two primary units: The already-mentioned IBRD and the International Development Association (IDA), which was created in 1960.

The IBRD lends only to governments who are credit-worthy; in other words, there is an expectation that they will repay their loans. The IDA, by contrast, only lends to governments who are not credit-worthy and are usually the poorest nations. Together, they create a “one-two” punch in global lending to any government that they are able to talk into borrowing. The U.S. currently contributes about $1 billion per year of taxpayer funds to the IDA.

Three other affiliates combine with the World Bank, to be collectively called the World Bank Group:

- The International Finance Corporation (IFC) – Founded in 1956, lends directly to the private sector in developing counties.
- The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) -Founded in 1988, provides guarantees to investors in developing countries against losses caused by noncommercial risks.
- The International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) – Founded in 1966, provides international facilities for conciliation and arbitration of investment disputes.

Headquarters for the World Bank is Washington, DC. It employs approximately 7,000 in the Washington complex, and another 3,000 in 109 offices scattered throughout member countries.

IBRD funds its lending operations by selling AAA-rated bonds and other debt instruments to other banks, pension funds, insurance companies and corporations around the world. By contrast, the IDA is funded by (taxpayer) contributions from member countries. Annual levels of lending is roughly equal between IBRD and IDA. While the IFC generates its own capital in open markets, MIGA and ICSID receive the majority of their funding from the World Bank, much of which is taxpayer funded.

Ownership of the World Bank consists of voting shares held by member countries, according to size and contributions. Currently, the U.S. is the largest shareholder with 16.4 percent of total votes. The next largest voting blocks are Japan (7.9 percent) and Germany (4.5 percent). Because major decisions require an 85 percent super-majority vote, the U.S. can effectively veto any change (100% -16.4% = 83.6%).

American Hegemony

It should be noted that the United Nations is headquartered in the United States, on land originally donated to it by David Rockefeller. The Bretton Woods Conference was held in New Hampshire. Every president of the World Bank has hailed from the United States. It is no wonder that the rest of the world views the World Bank as an American operation.

There has been an unwritten but traditional rule that the World Bank president will always be an American, while the president of the IMF is European. (A recent exception to this is the current IMF president, who is Canadian)

It is instructive to review the past presidents of the World Bank, because it demonstrates which elite cabal is really in control of World Bank operations. In turn, this will point strongly to the real beneficiaries of the World Bank hegemony. The complete biographies and accomplishments of these men far exceed the available space in this report, so only a few highlights are noted.

1. Eugene Meyer. June to December, 1946. Chairman, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve from 1930-1933; owner of the Washington Post; Member, Council on Foreign Relations; agent of Lazard Freres, Brown Brothers, Harriman; appointed head of the War Finance Corporation during WWI by Woodrow Wilson.

2. John J. McCloy. March 1947 to April 1949. Member and chair of the Council on Foreign Relations; Chairman, Ford Foundation; Chairman, Chase Manhattan Bank; lawyer whose firm was council to Chase Manhattan Bank.

3. Eugene Black. July 1949 to December 1962. Chairman, Board of Directors for the Federal Reserve System (1933-34); senior vice president of Chase Manhattan Bank; Member, Council on Foreign Relations; member of Bilderbergers; created the International Finance Corporation and the International Development Association at the World Bank.

4. George Woods. January 1963 to March 1968. Vice president of

Harris, Forbes & Co.; vice president of Chase Bank; vice president of and board member of First Boston Corp. (one of the largest U.S. investment banking firms).

5. Robert Strange McNamara. April 1968 to June 1981. President and director of Ford Motor Company; Secretary of Defense in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations; member of Trilateral Commission, Council on Foreign Relations and Bilderbergers; honorary council trustee of Aspen Institute. Personally negotiated China's entrance into the World Bank.

6. A.W. Clausen. July 1981 to June 1986. President, CEO and chairman of Bank of America; member, Trilateral Commission; member, Bretton-Woods Committee.

7. Barber B. Conable. July 1986 to August 1991. Member of U.S. House of Representatives from 1965 to 1985; member Trilateral Commission and Council on Foreign Relations; senior fellow, American Enterprise Institute; board member, New York Stock Exchange; member, Commission on Global Governance.

8. Lewis T. Preston. September 1991 to May 1995. President, CEO and chairman of J.P. Morgan & Co., and chairman of the executive committee; vice president of Morgan Guaranty Trust Co.; member and treasurer of Council on Foreign Relations; director of General Electric.

9. James D. Wolfensohn. June 1995 to 2005 Executive partner and head of the investment banking department, Salomon Brothers (New York); executive deputy chairman and managing director, Schroders Ltd. (London); director, Rockefeller Foundation; board member, Rockefeller University; honorary trustee, Brookings Institution; Director, Population Council (founded by John D. Rockefeller); member, Council on Foreign Relations.

10. Paul Wolfowitz. 2005 – present. Deputy Secretary of Defense (2001-2005); member, Trilateral Commission; member, Council on Foreign Relations; member, Bilderbergers; director of the neocon flagship, Project for the New American Century (PNAC); member of the elite "Vulcans" group that advised George W. Bush on foreign policy during the 2000 presidential elections (other neocon members included Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell and Richard Perle); member of and frequent speaker at Social Democrats USA (successor to the Socialist Party of America).

An important pattern emerges here. These men frame a 50-year time period stretching from 1946 to 2006. The early players have long since passed away. There was no social connection between the early and latter presidents. Yet, seven out of ten are members of the Council on Foreign Relations; four are members of the Trilateral Commission, seven have major global bank affiliations (Chase Manhattan, J.P. Morgan, Bank of America, First Boston, Brown Brothers, Harriman, Salomon Brothers, Federal Reserve), and four men were directly connected to Rockefeller interests.

A detailed analysis is not required to see the pattern emerge: Global bankers (the same old crowd) and their related global proxies, have completely dominated the World Bank for its entire history. Collectively and individually, they have always operated purposefully and consistently for their own self-interested, financial gain. Why would anyone expect even one of them to act out of character (e.g., be concerned for world poverty) while directing the helm of the World Bank?

Purposes of convenience

Whatever the true purposes of the World Bank and IMF might have been, the publicly displayed purposes have changed when it was convenient and necessary.

In 1944, reconstruction of war torn countries after WW II was the important issue.

When the Bank demonstrated its impotence by loaning only a pittance of less than $500 million, it changed its pubic image by positioning itself as a check and balance to the expansion of communism. Without the World Bank to engage all of the lesser countries of the world who were susceptible to communist influence, communism might spread and ultimately threaten to end the cold war with an ugly nuclear Holocaust.

Public and legislative sentiment ultimately fizzled and the Bank was again under heavy criticism when Robert Strange McNamara was appointed president.

Poverty Reduction: Trojan Horse

As noted above, McNamara was president of the World Bank from 1968 through 1981. He was also among the original membership of the Trilateral Commission, founded in 1973 by Rockefeller and Brzezinski, and was widely considered to be a central figure in the global elite of his day.

It was McNamara who caused the focus of the World Bank to fall on poverty and poverty reduction. This has essentially remained the siren call right into the present. This was a brilliant maneuver because who would ever say they are anti-poor or pro-poverty? Any attack on the Bank would thus be viewed as an attack on poverty relief itself. From 1968 onward, the battle cry of the Bank has been "eliminate poverty."

This is clearly seen on the About Us page of the World Bank web site, where these words are prominently displayed:

> *"Each institution (IBRD and IDA) plays a different but supportive role in* ***our mission of global poverty reduction and the improvement of living standards.****"* [emphasis added]

However, Article I of The Articles of Agreement of the IBRD, as amended on February 16, 1989, state its official Purposes as follows:

> *(i) To assist in the reconstruction and development of territories of members by facilitating the investment of capital for productive purposes, including the restoration of economies destroyed or disrupted by war, the reconversion of productive facilities to peacetime needs and the encouragement of the development of productive facilities and resources in less developed countries.*

> *(ii) To promote private foreign investment by means of guarantees or*

participations in loans and other investments made by private investors; and when private capital is not available on reasonable terms, to supplement private investment by providing, on suitable conditions, finance for productive purposes out of its own capital, funds raised by it and its other resources.

(iii) To promote the long-range balanced growth of international trade and the maintenance of equilibrium in balances of payments by encouraging international investment for the development of the productive resources of members, thereby assisting in raising productivity, the standard of living and conditions of labor in their territories.

(iv) To arrange the loans made or guaranteed by it in relation to international loans through other channels so that the more useful and urgent projects, large and small alike, will be dealt with first.

(v) To conduct its operations with due regard to the effect of international investment on business conditions in the territories of members and, in the immediate postwar years, to assist in bringing about a smooth transition from a wartime to a peacetime economy.

*The Bank shall be guided in all its decisions by the purposes set forth above.*3

Note that the word "poverty" does not appear even once. The reason is clear: Whatever "business as usual" might be with the Bank, it has nothing to do with poverty or poverty reduction. Rather, the Bank is in business to loan money by stimulating borrowing demand in developing countries, with a view to increasing international trade. The primary beneficiaries of international trade are the global corporations, and the poor are actually poorer as a result.

This hypocrisy was noted even by Nobel laureate and former World Bank chief economist, Joseph Stiglitz, as late as 2002:

As far as these 'client countries' were concerned, it was a charade in which the politicians pretended to do something to redress the problems [of poverty] while financial interests worked to preserve as

much of the status quo as they could.4
Liberalization and Structural Adjustments

When Alden Clausen (also an original member of the Trilateral Commission) took over the reins from Robert McNamara in 1981, a massive shakeup in the bank occurred. As Stiglitz noted,

> *"In the early 1980's a purge occurred inside the World Bank, in its research department, which guided the Bank's thinking and direction."5*

Clausen, a true core member of the global elite, brought in a new chief economist with radical new ideas:

> *"…Ann Krueger, an international trade specialist, best known for her work on 'rent seeking' — how special interests use tariffs and other protectionist measures to increase their incomes at the expense of others…**Krueger saw government as the problem. Free markets were the solution to the problems of developing countries.**"6* [emphasis added]

This was precisely the time when so-called liberalization policies and Structural Adjustments were forcefully implemented as a means of forcing countries to privatize industries. If governments were the problem, then they should turn over areas of critical infrastructure to private multinational corporations which, according to Krueger, could perform better and more efficiently than bureaucratic government bodies.

Not surprisingly, most of the career staff economists left the Bank in the early 1980's in protest over Clausen and Krueger's policies.

How the Money Laundry Works

The mechanism and operation of Structural Adjustments, along with the tight cooperation between the IMF and the World Bank, was adequately covered in The August Review's Global Banking: The International Monetary Fund. The following well-documented example will be the "picture worth a thousand words" in the Review's effort to profile selfserving Bank and global corporate policies. It also demonstrates the "tag-team" approach used by the Bank and IMF in the prying open of closed markets in uncooperative countries. It's a rather tangled story, but careful reading will produce understanding of how the "system" works.

Water Wars

> *In 1998, the IMF approved a loan of $138 million for Bolivia it described as designed to help the country control inflation and stabilize its domestic economy. The loan was contingent upon Bolivia's adoption of a series of "structural reforms," including Privatization of "all remaining public enterprises," including water services. Once these loans were approved, Bolivia was under intense pressure from the World Bank to ensure that no public subsidies for water existed and that all water projects would be run on a "cost recovery" basis, meaning that citizens must pay the full construction, financing, operation and maintenance costs of a water project. Because water is an essential human need and is crucial for agriculture, cost recovery pricing is unusual, even in the developed world.*
>
> *In this context, Cochabamba, the third largest city in Bolivia, put its water works up for sale in late 1999.*
>
> *Only one entity, a consortium led by Bechtel subsidiary Aguas del Tunari, offered a bid, and it was awarded a 40-year concession to provide water. The exact details of the negotiation were kept secret, and Bechtel claimed that the numbers within the contract are "intellectual property." But, it later came to light that the price included the financing by Cochabamba's citizens of a part of a huge dam construction project being undertaken by Bechtel, even though water from the Misicuni Dam Project would be 600% more expensive than alternative water sources. Cochabambans were also required to pay Bechtel a contractually guaranteed 15% profit, meaning that the people of Cochabamba were asked to pay for investments while the private sector got the profits.*

Immediately upon receiving the concession, the company raised water rates by as much as 400% in some instances. These increases came in an area where the minimum wage is less than $100 a month. After the price hike, self-employed men and women were estimated to pay one quarter of their monthly earnings for water.

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The city's residents were outraged. In January of 2000, a broad coalition called the Coordination for the Defense of Water and Life, or simply La Coordinadora, led by a local worker, Oscar Olivera, called for peaceful demonstrations. Cochabamba was shut down for four days by a general strike and transportation stoppage, but the demonstrations stopped once the government promised to intervene to lower water rates. However, when there were no results in February, the demonstrations started again. This time, however, demonstrators were met with tear gas and police opposition, leaving 175 injured and two youths blinded.

The threat that privatization of public services under GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) poses to democracy were demonstrated in March 2000. La Coordinadora held an unofficial referendum, counted nearly 50,000 votes, and announced that 96% of the respondents favored the cancellation of the contract with Aguas del Tunari. They were told by the water company that there was nothing to negotiate.

On April 4, the residents of the city returned to the streets, shutting down the city. Again, they were met with police resistance, and on April 8, the government declared martial law. The Bolivian military shot a 17-year-old protester in the face, killing him. However, the protests continued, and, on April 10, the government relented, signing an accord that agreed to the demand of the protesters to reverse the water concession. The people of Cochabamba took back *their water.*

Unfortunately, this inspiring story didn't simply end with the victory for the people of Cochabamba. On February 25, 2002, Bechtel filed a grievance using investor protections granted in a Bolivia-Netherlands Bilateral Investment Agreement at the World Bank, demanding a $25 million dollar payment as compensation for lost profits.7

Note: Bechtel Engineering is the largest civil engineering company in the world. It is privately owned by the Bechtel family. For many years, general counsel (and vice-president) for Bechtel was none other than original Trilateral Commission member Caspar Weinberger.

Since then, the World Bank has granted additional "poverty reduction" loans to Bolivia. Carefully read the Bank's current (2006) assessment on Bolivia found on its web site:

*"Bolivia is experiencing a time of difficulty and uncertainty. In recent months, various political and social disturbances have escalated with serious consequences, culminating in the resignation of President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada in October 2003, and the appointment of Vice-President Carlos Mesa as President. The current administration inherits a difficult economic, political and social climate, which is compounded by long-term issues, such as profound inequality, an economy that has been adversely affected by the region's recent economic slump, and widespread public disenchantment with corruption."*8

Political and social disturbances? Difficult economic, political and social climate? Profound inequality? Widespread disenchantment with corruption? It leaves one speechless.

So, in the case of Bolivia, we see the following in operation:

- An IMF loan is made to Bolivia, with conditionalities
- The World Bank steps in to enforce the conditionalities and impose structural adjustments
- The World Bank loans "development" funds to Bolivia, and simultaneously brings in private bank consortiums to fund the

various projects that Bechtel had in mind.
- Bechtel makes a sole-source bid, and it is accepted.
- The water project ends in total failure and Bechtel gets kicked out after extreme political pressure from consumers.
- Bechtel files a “lost profit” claim according to a pre-negotiated “insurance guarantee” with the World Bank Group (MIGA, see above.)
- If Bechtel wins its claim, it will be paid off with taxpayer money contributed by member countries.
- Undoubtedly, any loans from private-sector banks that later turn sour, will be bailed-out with taxpayer funds as well.

This kind of operation is brazen stealing (albeit perhaps legally) of funds from everyone in sight: Bolivia, the city of Cochabamba, the people of Cochabamba, U.S. taxpayers. The only beneficiaries are Bechtel, the commercial banks and a few corrupt politicians who got their customary bribes and kickbacks.

A penetrating question remains to be answered: When did Bechtel first set their sights on the Bolivia deal? Did Bechtel have a role in suggesting or creating the conditionalities and Structural Adjustments specified by the World Bank in the first place? If so, there would be grounds for criminal investigation.

It is not likely that the World Bank will tell us, because of its very secretive inner workings. Even Stiglitz has noted,

> *“The IMF and World Bank still have disclosure standards far weaker than those of governments in democracies like the United States, or Sweden or Canada. They attempt to hide critical reports; it is only their inability to prevent leaks that often forces the eventual disclosure.”9*

Corruption

The World Bank has received accusations of corruption for many years. Since the Bank is an independent specialized agency of the United Nations and considering the old adage, “The fruit doesn’t fall far from the tree", this might not come as a surprise to most. The United Nations has a major and documented track record on corruption of every conceivable sort. It would be too simplistic to just leave it at that.

In May, 2004, Sen. Richard Lugar (R-Indiana), as Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, kicked off the most recent inquiry into corruption related to the activities of the multilateral development banks, of which the World Bank is foremost.

The heads of the various development banks were invited to testify (voluntarily) before the Committee. According to Sen. Lugar, James Wolfensohn "declined the invitation, citing the established practice of Bank officials not to testify before the legislatures of their numerous member countries."

Witnesses before the Committee testified that as much as $100 billion may have been lost to corruption in World Bank lending projects.

In Sen. Lugar's opening remarks, he points out that the entire history of the World Bank is suspect, with between 5 percent and 25 percent of all lending being lost to corruption.

> *"But corruption remains a serious problem. Dr. Jeffrey Winters of Northwestern University, who will testify before us today, estimates that the World Bank 'has participated mostly passively in the corruption of roughly $100 billion of its loan funds intended for development.' Other experts estimate that between 5 percent and 25 percent of the $525 billion that the World Bank has lent since 1946 has been misused. This is equivalent to between $26 billion and $130 billion. Even if corruption is at the low end of estimates, millions of people living in poverty may have lost opportunities to improve their health, education, and economic condition."10*

One must wonder why World Bank officials have been so sloppy and careless with taxpayer dollars. Even further, one must wonder if the corruption was a necessity to achieve the underlying purposes of the Bank, that is, to create bogus and unwanted projects in order to "stimulate" trade.

Sen. Lugar continued his opening remarks,

> *"Corruption thwarts development efforts in many ways. Bribes can influence important bank decisions on projects and on contractors. Misuse of funds can inflate project costs, deny needed assistance to the poor, and cause projects to fail. Stolen money may prop up dictatorships and finance human rights abuses. Moreover, when developing countries lose development bank funds through corruption, the taxpayers in those poor countries are still obligated to repay the development banks. So, not only are the impoverished cheated out of development benefits, they are left to repay the resulting debts to the banks."*11

It has not been determined which Bank employees might have taken bribes in exchange for influence, but one can be sure that any deal starting with corruption only has one direction to go — down. In the end, it is helpless individuals who are left holding the bag. The incurred debts and failed projects just add to the impoverishment of already poor people.

This is not to say that charges of corruption at the World Bank are modern revelations only. In 1994, marking the 50th anniversary of its creation at Bretton Woods, South End Press released "50 Years is Enough: The Case Against the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund,." edited by Kevin Danaher. The book details official Bank and IMF reports that reveal the same kind of corruption back then. In addition, it revealed different types of corruption, for instance,

> *"Beyond the wasted money and the environmental devastation, there was an even more sinister side to the Bank during the McNamara years: the World Bank's predilection for increasing support to military regimes that tortured and murdered their subjects, sometimes immediately after the violent overthrow of more democratic governments. In 1979, Senator James Abourezk (D-South Dakota) denounced the bank on the Senate floor, noting that the Bank was increasing 'loans to four newly repressive governments [Chile, Uruguay, Argentina and the Philippines] twice as fast as all others.' He noted that 15 of the world's most repressive governments*

would receive a third of all World Bank loan commitments in 1979, and that Congress and the Carter administration had cut off bilateral aid to four of the 15 — Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Ethiopia — for flagrant human rights violations. He blasted the Bank's 'excessive secretiveness' and reminded his colleagues that 'we vote the money, yet we do not know where it goes.'" 12

The text speaks for itself and needs no comment. Readers of this report will likely have a better understanding of where the money went!

Conclusions

This report does not pretend to be an exhaustive analysis of the World Bank. There are many facets, examples and case studies that could be explored. In fact, many critical and analytical books have been written about the World Bank. The object of this report was to show how the World Bank fits into globalization as a central member in the triad of global monetary powers: The IMF, the BIS and the World Bank.

The World Bank is likely to continue to operate despite any amount of political flack or public protest. Such is the pattern of elitist-dominated institutions. Such is the history of the International Monetary Fund and the Bank for International Settlements.

It is sufficient to conclude that…

- of the two architects of the World Bank, one was a top Soviet communist agent (Harry Dexter White) and the other was a British idealogue (John Maynard Keynes) totally dedicated to globalism (See Global Banking: The International Monetary Fundfor more details on White and Keynes)
- From the beginning, the Bank has been dominated by international banking interests and members of the Council on Foreign Relations and later by the Trilateral Commission
- the cry of "poverty reduction" is a sham to conceal the recycling of billions of taxpayer dollars, if not trillions, into private hands
- the cry of "poverty reduction" defuses critics of the Bank as being anti-poor and pro-poverty

- corruption at the World Bank goes back decades, if not all the way to the very beginning

Footnotes

1. World Bank web site, About Page
2. The August Review, Global Banking: The International Monetary Fund
3. World Bank web site, IBRD Articles of Agreement: Article I
4. Stiglitz, Globalization and its Discontents (Norton, 2002), p. 234
5. ibid, p. 13
6. ibid
7. Wallach, Whose Trade Organization? (The New Press, 2004), p.125]
    - See also, Bechtel Vs. Bolivia: The Bolivian Water Revolt
    - See also, The New Yorker, letter on Leasing the Rain
    - See also, PBS, Leasing the Rain
8. World Bank web site, Bolivia Country Brief
9. Stiglitz, op. cit., p. 234
10. Lugar, U.S. Senate Website, $100 billion may have been lost to World Bank Corruption, May 13, 2004
11. ibid.
12. Hanaher, 50 Years is Enough: The Case Against the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, (South End Press, 1994), p. 10

NOTE: Carl Teichrib contributed to this report

BIS Innovation Hub: Central Bank Digital Currency Advances

Fintech is the financial infrastructure of Sustainable Development, aka Technocracy, and the Bank for International Settlements is the prime architect and driver. But first, cash must be replaced by a digital currency. TN Editor

This time last year when the Bank for International Settlements released their Annual Economic Report, it combined with the announcement of a new initiative called the '*BIS Innovation Hub*' (also known as '*Innovation BIS 2025*'). The BIS refer to the Innovation Hub as a medium term project that comprises three main elements:

- ***Identify and develop in-depth insights into critical trends in technology affecting central banking***
- ***Develop public goods in the technology space geared towards improving the functioning of the global financial system***

- ***Serve as a focal point for a network of central bank experts on innovation***

As you can see, technological innovation is at the core of the Hub's remit.

The initial phase of the project saw Hub's opened up in Switzerland, Hong Kong and Singapore. An operational agreement was signed with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority in September 2019, followed by an agreement with the Swiss National Bank in October. The Hub in Singapore began operations in November.

With phase one completed, the BIS have now moved into the second phase which they warned was going to happen when the Hub first launched. Accompanying the release of this year's Annual Economic Report, the institution announced that the Hub is expanding to new locations in both Europe and North America.

Over the next two years, the Bank of England will be opening a centre, along with the Bank of Canada, the European Central Bank and four Nordic central banks (Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Iceland). A '*strategic partnership*' will also be formed with the Federal Reserve System.

East and West may appear divided in the geopolitical sphere, but in the world of central banking they are very much united behind the common goal of the Hub.

As the BIS outlined in a press release, the expansion will '***allow Innovation Hub to spur central bank work across multiple fintech pillars***'. General Manager Agustin Carstens confirmed that the '***new centres will expand our reach significantly and help create a global force for fintech innovation***'.

Most pointedly, however, the expansion, according to the Head of the Innovation Hub Benoit Coeure, will mean that it is '***well placed to advance work on a broad range of issues of importance to the central banking community, including digital currency and digital***

payments'. Coeure also cited distributed ledger technology as a key aspect of the Hub's work.

In October 2019 I posted an article about the Hub (*Innovation BIS 2025: A Stepping Stone Towards an Economic 'New World Order'*) and argued how the introduction of it tied directly into the agenda for implementing a network of central bank digital currencies over the next few years. I followed up this article with another which offered more detail on the Innovation Hub (*BIS Announce New Appointments and Launch Singapore Hub Centre*).

To add more weight to the idea that the Hub exists to help facilitate a CBDC future, Agustin Carstens mentioned on presenting the BIS Annual Economic Report that '***if CBDCs are to fulfil their potential and promise as a new means of payment, their design and implications deserve close study and consideration. The BIS will continue supporting central banks in their CBDC research and design efforts, through the new BIS Innovation Hub, its committees, and broader analytical work***.'

> ***As the Hub gathers experience, a home-grown agenda will quickly be developed. A key question informing the BIS Innovation Hub's work is whether money itself needs to be reinvented for a changing environment, or whether the emphasis should be on improving the way it is provided and used.***

As I have written about previously, central banks have now begun to outline specific technical details on how a CBDC could be built (*A Look at CBDC Developments at the Bank of England – Part One*). This comes as global payment systems are being reformed so as to be compatible with blockchain and distributed ledger technology – a process that is earmarked for completion around 2024.

With the events of the past few months, it is impossible to discuss CBDC's without factoring in the impact of Covid-19. This appears increasingly to be the major international crisis that global planners hope will catalyse the move into a fully digital economic system. And the

BIS Innovation Hub is ideally placed to respond.

In remarks made in April, Benoit Coeure asked whether the pandemic would '***accelerate the shift towards virtual banking***'. Musing on his own question, Coeure stated that '***in the next months and years, the BIS Innovation Hub will remain busy scanning technological trends in finance and their consequences for central banks and financial regulators***'.

The importance of the Hub to the CBDC agenda is there to see, particularly with the onset of Covid-19. A line in the BIS Annual Economic Report supports what Coeure had to say:

> ***The Covid-19 crisis, and the attendant rise of electronic payments, are likely to boost CBDC development across the globe.***

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva recently told Italy's National Consultation that '***digital is a big winner in this crisis***' and that the pandemic may have '***accelerated the digital transformation by two or three years***'.

The BIS insist, however, that research on CBDC's is '***still in its early stages, and development efforts will take some time***'.

From my perspective, by 2025 CBDC's will begin to be introduced, initially in conjunction with cash. But the long term objective is for the abolition of all tangible financial assets to be replaced with intangible wealth. The BIS attempted to convey in their annual report that a CBDC would prove as a '***digital complement to physical cash***'. Perhaps to begin with, but nobody should deceive themselves into believing that cash has any sustainable future if and when CBDC's are offered to the general public.

To reinforce this notion, this is what Agustin Carstens stated during a speech at the Central Bank of Ireland in March 2019:

> ***Like cash, a CBDC could and would be available 24/7, 365 days a year. At first glance, not much changes for someone, say,***

> ***stopping off at the supermarket on the way home from work. He or she would no longer have the option of paying cash. All purchases would be electronic.***

What central banks (in line with state legislatures) are not going to do is simply outlaw cash when CBDC's become available. I believe what they want is for banknotes to dwindle to a level where they can make the argument that the servicing costs of maintaining the cash infrastructure outweigh the amount of cash still in circulation and being used for payment.

An Access to Cash report published in the UK last year warned that because of bank branch closures and the decline of ATM's, Britain's cash network was at real risk of collapsing. Introduce a CBDC into the equation and you can see how cash will soon be deemed nonviable. Those who might opt to use cash over a digital currency would eventually have no other option than to transfer their money into a CBDC.

One of the main goals of global planners is to target what they call the '*unbanked*' or the '*underbanked*'. In other words, those who exist largely outside of the financial system and trade anonymously. The BIS Annual Report declared that 1.7 billion adults and hundreds of millions of firms '***are tied to cash as their only means of payment***'. That is one fifth of the world's population that central banks are seeking to bring into their world – a digital only construct in which the only alternative is a life of destitution.

Essentially, the central banking fraternity will want to be able to pinpoint the abolition of cash on the advancement of technology and the changing payment habits of the consumer, thereby taking the emphasis off themselves.

With regards to changing consumer behaviour, the unproven fear perpetuated throughout the media that cash could transmit Covid-19 has successfully managed to undermine cash to the point where a large swathe of people have stopped using it. The latest statistics from Link show that in the UK transaction volume is down 47% on this time last year.

Over time, central banks will be able to use a sustained reduction in demand for cash to their advantage. As Yves Mersch of the European Central Bank mentioned in May, '***if our customers, the people of Europe signalled a change in payments behaviour, we would want to preserve their direct link to the ultimate owner of our currency by maintaining their access to central bank liabilities***'.

The owner being the central bank, the liabilities being a CBDC.

The ideological agenda of central banks to digitise the entirety of the world's financial system and to maintain their power base is being spearheaded by the Bank for International Settlements through their Innovation Hub. Unless people begin to recognise where the manipulation and growth in the CBDC narrative is coming from, and how there is a targeted agenda to guide the world into a cashless society, global planners will in the years to come get their way.

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BIS Creates 'Innovation Hubs' To Plot The 'Future Of Money'

The BIS Innovation Hubs are a global network to develop and launch Fintech solutions for the coming Green Economy, aka Technocracy. At least 15 global cities are slated to host an Innovation Hub and each will be staffed with the best computer scientists money can buy. TN Editor

The Bank for International Settlements (BIS) will establish four additional "Innovation Hub" branches – in Toronto, Stockholm, London and a joint location for Paris and Frankfurt – over the next two years in a major expansion of its year-old effort to ponder the future of money.

These new locations, announced Tuesday, "will be well placed to advance work" on digital currency and distributed ledger technology (DLT) alongside other central banking issues including cyber security, artificial intelligence and digital payments, said Innovation Hub chief Benoît Cœuré in a press statement.

BIS, often referred to as the central bank for central banks, also announced its Innovation Hub will form a strategic partnership with the U.S. Federal Reserve System.

Coming exactly a year after the BIS unveiled its vision to build an international tech collaborative for its 62 member central banks, the expansion solidifies the Swiss-based institution's multifaceted drive to incubate fintech at the highest levels of monetary policymaking.

It also signals that the BIS remains serious about including at least part of the lessons of cryptocurrency in those discussions. BIS had previously tasked its existing Innovation Hubs with investigating stablecoins, DLT and central bank digital currencies (CBDC), among other trends.

The latest batch of Hub cities may not surprise those who closely follow the rather obscure realm of central banking innovation. The Bank of Canada and Sveriges Riksbank are both considering projects that could fundamentally reshape how their citizenry interacts with money, and the European Central Bank (ECB), represented by Paris and Frankfurt joined the BIS and four other central banks in January, including those of Sweden and Britain, to study CBDC.

Perhaps more surprising is the staggering breadth of central banks the year-old Innovation Hub initiative is now set to unite.

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