

USA Inc

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In the early teens, the government privatization wave that began in the latter half of the 20th century became a tsunami. There have been numerous early studies that have pointed to global events, such as the ongoing ME guerrilla war that entangled US military forces in conflicts from Lebanon to Pakistan, as the cause for this change. However, the key driver -- one that only became apparent after the credit crunch and the associated recession of 2008-10 -- was that the world's trust in the ability of the US government, at all levels down to the local, to meet its financial obligations had collapsed. Historians now consider this period as the turning point, the first time the US could actually be considered to be on the path to become a privately run state.

The details of how this happened have been well documented. As confidence collapsed (with the speed that only a completely unregulated global financial market could provide), all levels of the US government fell into varying levels of financial crisis. At first, the natural response by governments unable to raise new funds was to cut their budgets. However, global money managers quickly exposed that paltry effort for band-aid rather than the amputation that was needed. Unable to persuade a resolute marketplace and desperate to maintain a core set of services, governments at all levels began to sell off assets at an accelerating rate (those governmental bodies that delayed or refused to undertake these actions were put into receivership by the courts).

Roads, waterworks, military bases, schools, parks, and much more were quickly sold at appropriate prices. Attempts by government's to retain ownership and rent them as multi-year leases were initially successful, but as the crisis deepened the market cooled to these schemes. Within a year of the start of what is incorrectly but popularly termed "The Great Theft," outright sales of assets to global investment funds, corporations and individuals were by far more common. The speed of this transfer in ownership has been unmatched by any example prior or since. By 2015, less than three years after the panic began, upwards of 60% of all public assets from the national to the local levels were formally in private hands.

The Results

With government assets now in the hands of private owners, the magic of the marketplace began to rework American society. What was left of public governance was primarily relegated to servicing debt. Here's a list of the salient improvements:

- Nearly all roadways, from interstates to local networks, became toll roads. Further, toll road wireless billing systems, run by private companies, were expanded to charge for infractions -- from speeding to improper turns -- of the National Roadway Conduct statutes.
- Universal K-12 schools were replaced with a combination of public online education and private in-person services. Education had finally become a commoditized in the form of a buffet of national online programs that provided state of the art educational technique tailored to individual needs (mass customization) at a low annual cost -- for example, most programs cost less than \$5 a day. In-person private education became a luxury item reserved only for those that could pay for the extra services.
- National security services were privatized in 2020. Those remaining assets that were still intact following the draw down earlier in the decade (many consider the loss of many of these assets due to looting a travesty and blame it on the failure of Congress to privatize sooner) were either sold through public auction or put into use by the private firms that assumed national security duties. In short, the national security system was finally right-

- sized to meet the needs of the global security environment with the President assuming the permanent role of Chairman of the board for the holding company that ran it. Much of the funding for the newly minted privatized national security system was accomplished through fees for services provided to corporations for protection their assets both globally and domestically.
- Police and fire services are still in the process of market consolidation. Early efforts at privatization created a plethora of new firms formed by former police departments and other first responders. By 2023, three major providers have finally reached a scale sufficient to offer national coverage and are quickly gaining market share due to their ability to offer quick response to member needs regardless of location and a very comprehensive set of services (from SWAT to hostage negotiation to HAZMAT clean-up). However, much of the country is still reliant on local providers and franchises of varying quality although this is difficult to determine with accuracy due to widespread corporate purchases of police and fire services for their employees.
 - The courts system has been reformed through the use of computerized automation supplied by several major competitive systems. Expert systems can now yield verdicts in seconds pending the input of evidence. This allows rapid resolution of conflict at the both criminal and civil levels. For most that can afford it, legal counsel now includes a certified legal systems analyst in addition to a lawyer, for any major court case. Those that can't afford it are offered automated legal help that can record testimony and gather facts for the case for a fraction of the cost of the previous system.

Growing Pains

Despite these victories, the growth of the US privatization effort has occasionally been painful. These growth pains can be grouped into three categories: secession, riots/protests, and criminal activity. Let's examine each in detail. Since 2014, there have been 27 different attempts at secession from the US and only four have been successful. These successes include the early departure of Vermont and New Hampshire as independent states and the declaration of New York City as an independent financial zone. The fourth and final success was the secession of seven counties in the American southwest that bordered Mexico.

All the other attempts, from California's Independence referendum to the attempt by Omaha's city council to form the nucleus of a new Christian state, were all thwarted through a combination of corporate boycotts and prompt military action by the forces of our national private military services. Fortunately, most of these successful efforts have had only moderate success as independent entities. The only exception, the emergence of New York City as an independent financial zone, can be considered a success due to the financial windfall it received when it declared its willingness to serve as an independent hub for the global marketplace without political complications and restrictions.

There have been numerous riots and protests during the entire privatization effort. Incidents of significant civil disobedience reached a high of 1,200 a day in 2015, but have since fallen to less than 200 a day as of the writing of this report. The worst single incident was in response to the National Repossession Act of 2017, which required the forcible eviction of 4.25 million homeowners from their properties due to their failure to switch to mandated variable rate mortgages. All other civil disturbances have been dealt with a reasonable degree of success through a combination of prompt security action to protect private property or other means. For example: the identification of the culprits by onsite surveillance companies that led to the temporary suspension of their employment and service privileges.

Criminal activity, the last of the major problems encountered, is by far the most difficult and intractable problem yet encountered by privatization. This category ranges from civil crime to

acts of terrorism. Civil crime is still a large and growing problem. Estimates of the criminal market's size are difficult to estimate, given the huge percentage of barter transactions in these activities. In short, the high rate of crimes against individuals have fallen drastically among those covered by police plans over the past decade. The 45% of the US population still outside of these service arrangements still suffer significant rates of crime and vigilante action is rife.

Acts of terrorism are still a problem that is still in the process of being brought under control. Early mass casualty bombings and the occasional "postal" employee have subsided through the advent of new surveillance technologies. However, the disruption of critical corporate systems and networks is on the rise. The most damaging of these attacks can result in billions of dollars in lost production and the disruption of critical private services. However, new corporate efforts to combine state of the art surveillance with rapid response forces has shown some promise in interdicting these attacks. The success of these enforcement efforts has been amplified by recent judicial changes that have automated the conviction of perpetrators based on recorded acts. This allows these certified teams to carry out the death penalty at the point of capture. We expect that these efforts will reduce the effect of disruptions drain on the national economy by five percent of gross national product by 2030 (which should be sufficient to allow economic growth to return).

Unfortunately, there have been indications that bio-terrorism is on the rise, with the worst incident to date occurring in San Antonio during the summer of 2023, inflicting some 300,000 casualties. Significantly, most of the information required for these acts have been developed by criminal groups located outside of the US for financial gain through extortion and other forms coercion. To prevent terrorists from inside of the US from acquiring this information and to slow the growth of criminal activity, national security licenses have been issued to international vendors to intercept these criminal elements within their countries of origin and terminate their activities. Time will tell if these efforts at early intervention will work. Regardless, we are hopeful.