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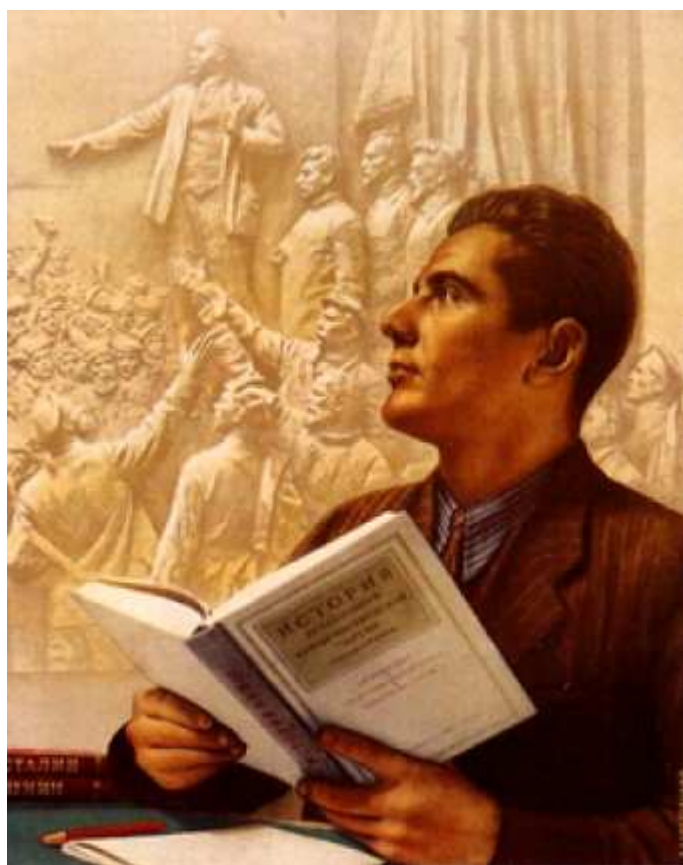
Violence in Mexico, Communism's a Flop, and other Startling Discoveries

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| September 13, 2010

[Ted Galen Carpenter](#)^[2]

There has been a blizzard of amazing discoveries by prominent political leaders across the globe over the past week.



China's political hierarchy is toying with the idea of modifying the country's "one child" policy^[3] after discovering that there may not be enough people of working age to support a large and growing number of retirees^[4]. Mao's political descendents also apparently noticed that the policy has inadvertently encouraged gender-

selection abortions and infanticide, thus creating a huge gender imbalance in the country. Of course, those trends had been obvious to outside observers for at least a generation.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton informed a rapt audience at the Council on Foreign Relations that Mexico's drug violence was taking on the characteristics of a full blown insurgency, and that the country was beginning to resemble Colombia twenty years ago. That's not a happy comparison, since Colombia in the 1980s and 1990s teetered on the brink of chaos. Of course, some experts warned nearly a decade ago that Mexico was headed down the same path [5] and reiterated that warning on [6] numerous [7] occasions [8] since then. One has to wonder where Clinton and other officials have been to come to that realization just now.

But if Clinton's discovery of the carnage south of the border was a tad belated, she is on top of developments compared to Fidel Castro. In an interview this past week, Fidel admitted that the communist model has apparently not been good for Cuba [9]. He reached that conclusion a mere 62 years after the revolution he led imposed that dreadful political and economic system on the people of his unfortunate country. Fidel gives a whole new dimension to the term "slow learner." (And when his distressed party comrades created an uproar about his remarks, Castro beat a hasty retreat and contended that he was misinterpreted [10].)

Perhaps the slow learners in America's political and policy elites may now make equally dramatic and astute observations regarding other issues. Some policy maker might realize that drug prohibition doesn't work any better than alcohol prohibition did in the 1920s, and that it produces the same disastrous side effects of corruption and violence. It might dawn on a prescient State Department official that the six-party talks involving North Korea and the latest installment in the endless Middle East peace talks are both exercises [11] in futility [12]. Perhaps the Obama administration might come to the conclusion that using military force to stop Iran's nuclear program would be a cure worse than the disease [13], since it would likely foment armed conflict throughout a swath of territory from the Mediterranean Sea to the India-Pakistan border. It is even possible that administration leaders might come to understand that Afghanistan is a sinkhole that is swallowing American lives and dollars with no hope of a favorable outcome [14]. And that realization might even lead to the long-overdue conclusion that nation-building crusades everywhere are a fool's errand [15].

If Fidel Castro can finally grasp, however briefly, that communism doesn't work, anything is possible.

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