

Why US is the only 'Superpower'

In a controversial book, John Perkins narrates a real life tale. His personal journey from the member of international community of highly paid professionals who are employed to cheat poor countries around the globe to maintain US monopoly. Eventually he calls himself as a former economic hit man and deconstructs international intrigue and corruption, the sinister mechanics of imperial manipulations and control

N Raghuram

This book certainly stands up to the expectations raised by its title. It also confirms commonly held suspicions of the critics regarding globalisation and US imperialism through the

politics of aid and debt. In a gripping narrative of his own story as an economic hitman (EHM), interlaced with the world affairs of his time, John Perkins beautifully describes how an elite group of men and women like him helped build a global empire of the US during the years he covered (1970s to 2004). In his own words, they "utilise international financial organisations to foment conditions that make other nations subservient to the corporatocracy" of the US. They are highly paid professionals who funnel money from the World Bank, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and other international funding agencies, into the coffers of US corporations. The modus operandi is simple. The invisible arm of corporatocracy cultivates some smart professionals and plants them in influential positions as consultants, experts, etc., to push international funding agencies into providing aid/loans for lofty 'development projects' to be executed by US corporations in recipient countries. "In essence, money never leaves the US; it is simply transferred from banking offices in Washington to the engineering offices in New York, Houston or San Francisco." Yet, the recipient country must pay it all back, with interest. The defaulting countries lose their bargaining edge and become subservient to the US foreign policy and its corporatocracy.

EHM is not a designation but a nickname for managers, engineers, economists etc., in private corpora-

tions who serve as the agents of US corporatocracy. Perkins assures us that people who play similar roles are more abundant now, have more euphemistic titles, and walk the corridors of every major corporation in the world.

Unlike the author, not all of them are recruited as a part of an organised conspiracy, nor are all of them clearly aware of their role. This is what makes the global economic exploitation system a lot more subtle, robust, widespread and dangerous, as the individuals and corporations

who stand to benefit from it get hooked to the ideology. If they fail, then there are the more dangerous 'jackals', who use violent underworld methods to achieve their goals. If they too fail, then the time-tested military methods come in handy to the war-happy American government, and the military industry is always too happy with the growth opportunities opened up by conflicts and wars.

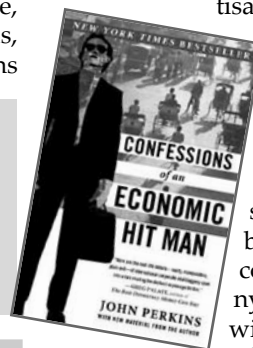
The author describes his own baptism into an EHM during one of his first jobs as an economist at MAIN (Chas T. Main Inc.), a low-profile but hugely successful Boston-based International consultancy company that was involved with World Bank's infrastructure projects

in Ecuador. With only a bachelors degree from Boston University "which did not seem to warrant a position as an economist with such a lofty consulting company" he visualised himself as a "dashing secret agent heading off to exotic lands, lounging beside hotel swimming pools, surrounded by gorgeous bikini-clad women, martini in hand". Through his descriptions of his many subsequent assignments, he convinces us that there is a lot of truth in this imagination.

In Indonesia of the 1970s, Perkins describes how the EHMs were used to make exaggerated projections to serve the US foreign policy and corporatocracy - to seduce Indonesia away from communism, coupled with the insatiable American thirst for oil resources. His bosses made it all very explicit to him, suggesting that it is "better to err on the higher

BOOK REVIEW

Confessions of an Economic HIT-MAN: The shocking inside story of how America REALLY took over the world. By John Perkins, Plume Books, 2006 Price: \$15.00 (Paperback)



This book is an essential reading for anyone interested in knowing about the US influence in their country or the world at large, not only in terms of economics and politics, but much more. It is a must for everyone who believes in the "free market" ideology

side than to underestimate", and he obliged. Interestingly, he continued to do such things against his conscience for over three decades, fully aware of what he was doing, before he quit and decided to write it all as his confessions in this book. Though his meteoric career growth explains why he drifted along this path, three decades is too long a time to suppress such strong contradictions, and equally difficult to evoke them again after such a long period of suppression. Nevertheless, for the purpose of enjoying the book and benefiting from its revelations, it is "better late than never".

The main chapters of the book range from controlling Indonesian infrastructure and oil to controlling Panama Canal, the Saudi Arabian money laundering affair, the financing of Osama Bin Laden, the Shah of Shahs and the great Iranian flopshow, the Columbian gateway to Latin America, Ecuador's oil, the alleged CIA assassinations of the

Presidents of Ecuador and Panama, the 'wild West of energy' era, the US invasion of Panama, the EHM failure in Iraq followed by the Iraq war, the Venezuelan triumph. Through these chapters, John Perkins deconstructs the official American view of the world with his own personal anecdotes and revelations of events and conversations to which he was privy.

In many ways, this book explains how USA, a country that doesn't have gold to back its currency, has an annual trade deficit of over 800 billion dollar presently, has debts of over five trillion dollar from the world, recklessly spends more than it earns and makes the world economy dependent on American consumption, manages to rule the world. India itself keeps its foreign currency assets of over 100 billion dollar in US securities. China has sunk over 600 billion dollar in US securities. Japan's stakes in US securities is in trillions. The US has invested in China less than half of

what China has invested in US. The same is the case with India. We have invested in US over 100 billion dollar while the US has invested less than 20 billion dollar in India. As calculated by some economists, today, to keep the US consumption-centric economy going, other countries have to remit 180 billion dollar every quarter, which is two billion dollar a day, to the US!

This book is an essential reading for anyone interested in knowing about the US influence in their country or the world at large, not only in terms of economics and politics, but much more. It is a must for everyone who believes in the "free market" ideology, and that US epitomises it. Also a must for both who strongly support or oppose liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation.

—The writer is Reader, School of Biotechnology, GGS Indraprastha University, Delhi

आप जागरूक और जिम्मेदार नागरिक हैं इसलिए पढ़ें हिंदी और अंग्रेजी में

कॉम्बैट लॉ

मानवाधिकार के मोर्चे पर डटी द्वैमासिक पत्रिका

- कानून अदालतों और फौजलों तक सीमित नहीं होता यह हमारे जीवन के हर क्षेत्र को प्रभावित करता है हमारी हर्दें तय करता है
- जरूरी है कानून जानना, समझना और इसकी पेचीदगी को तोड़ना कानून जानना हर नागरिक का अधिकार है तभी संभव है जन विरोधी कानूनों का प्रतिरोध और मानवाधिकारों की रक्षा



एक प्रति	:	हिंदी -	20 रुपये
		अंग्रेजी -	40 रुपये
वार्षिक	:	हिंदी -	100 रुपये
		अंग्रेजी -	220 रुपये
आजीवन सदस्य	:	हिंदी -	3000 रुपये
		अंग्रेजी -	5000 रुपये

नोट : सदस्यता शुल्क चेक/ड्राफ्ट द्वारा

केवल कॉम्बैट लॉ (Combat Law) के पक्ष में भेजें।

पत्रिका की सदस्यता के लिए लिखें :

कॉम्बैट लॉ

576, मस्जिद रोड, जंगपुरा, नयी दिल्ली 110014

दूरभाष - 011-65908842, 24378854

फैक्स - 011-24374502

ईमेल - editor@combatlaw.org, combatlaw.editor@gmail.com, letters2combatlaw@gmail.com

वेबसाइट-www.combatlaw.org