

Thoughts on Coming Apart and the Coming Great Reset



Turning and turning in the widening gyre

The falcon cannot hear the falconer

Kit Webster

Themes and Theses

Why I'm Contemplating Out Loud

(Initially formulated in the early 90s, following decades of reading history, philosophy, religion, psychology and a lot of contemplation, particularly on the subject of cycles. In the end, this is a relatively straightforward story about human nature and of history rhyming.)

The US will enter a period of crisis in the early 2000s. In the late 90s, I incorporated Strauss' and Howe's terminology of the Fourth Turning (without incorporating their generations paradigm) and agreed with Howe that the end stage of the crisis began with the Great Financial Crisis and would last into the early 2030s. We are now at the beginning of the end stage of the crisis.

The crisis will be serious and could be existential.

Internal strife will increase, up to and including secession and civil war.

International conflicts will increase as the vacuum created by the weakening of the US is filled by other players.

There will be many threads to the crisis, but the primary thread will be debt, deficits and entitlements. Other factors include, eg, demographics, a loss of meaning and myth and a loss of self-discipline.

Politics will move leftward as citizens look for some refuge from the chaos. The US will become increasingly susceptible to a (man) on a white horse, who can come from either the left or the right.

Inflation, as the most likely way to address debt since austerity is not politically acceptable, will significantly lower standards of living, exacerbating the civil crises.

Eventually, the dollar will be inflated away and lose its reserve status.

Once the old rot is cleared out, and assuming continuity, there will be the basis for the establishment of a new order.

There will be what Strauss and Howe calls a First Turning . It will be constructed out of the physical infrastructure, wealth, energy sources, thoughts and values in the culture at the time. At this point in time, those components are unknowable. We can anticipate that the next five years or so will be increasingly chaotic. We can anticipate that there will be destruction, and then reconstruction from some level. We cannot yet anticipate the form of the reconstruction or the level from which it will begin.

(Added around 2020) The loss of faith by our youth in our founding principles means that the new order will at least partially be based on new principles. As yet, I have no visibility as to what those principles might be.

(Added in the early 00s) While humans are contributing to global warming, policies implemented to address manmade global warming will create a significant energy crisis, probably toward the end of the Fourth Turning.

(Added in 2023) The lowering / elimination of standards in education, the judiciary, law enforcement, the military and other segments of our society will create a population unable to adequately comprehend, do or respond to the challenges of democracy and culture.

Thoughts and Prayers

September 5, 2025

Quotes to Contemplate

Everything that comes before 'but' is bullshit. - Aegon Targaryen

The 2nd Amendment was never designed with First thru Third Turnings in mind.

**The 2nd Amendment is about protecting oneself during Fourth Turnings.
- Luke Gromen**

People think the Supreme Court is about promoting justice. It's really about judging what the law requires. - Amy Coney Barrett

My strong belief is that if the Republicans come anywhere close to losing the House in the 2026 midterms because of Democratic Representatives from newly gerrymandered districts in California or elsewhere, Trump will declare those new Democratic members-elect to be 'illegitimate' because of an 'illegal' state process (like abandoning the fig leaf of an independent electoral districting commission). And while the federal government has next to no Constitutional role in certifying Congressional elections or members-elect, I think there's a pretty straightforward way that Trump could orchestrate a contested seating of the 120th Congress and force it to a Supreme Court decision. - Ben Hunt

Summary of Primary Thoughts To Contemplate In This Issue

Sometimes, thoughts and prayers are all we can do; sometimes some want more.

It'll never happen here. - Democracy requires virtue.

Thoughts and Prayers

(Obscure, abstract thoughts that go from free will and predestination to the necessity of religion. Definitely not to everyone's taste, with a high probability of offending, so feel free to move on.)

The children were killed in Minnesota - the tragedy is unimaginable. Actually, since we have lost a son, we can imagine. It's unimaginable.

All across the country, people said they were lifting up thoughts and prayers for everyone involved. Compassion, empathy, sorrow, even some schadenfreude.

Liberals were indignant, saying that thoughts and prayers were not enough. Gun control was needed. (Thoughts and prayers are rarely criticized for, say, earthquakes or collapsing buildings, but I don't want to be cynical.)

Everyone feels helpless and impotent in the face of tragedy.

There is nothing you can do, so you pray.

There is nothing you can do so you rail about gun control.

It's all you can do.

Often, it is what you have to do to maintain sanity or not breakdown into sobs.

One primary rule of life you learn as you grow older is that shit happens. Some of it is preventable; most of it is not. Bad things actually happen to good people all the time, and we really, really want to keep random negative things out of our lives.

I had a heart attack without prior symptoms. I have pretty clean arteries, but evidently a random bit of plaque broke off and I wound up with a widow-maker.

The laws of physics whip up a hurricane, and here we go - potentially hundreds of thousands of lives affected.

People come in many flavors, including evil and mentally ill. Part of successfully negotiating life is to stay away from those people. But sometimes, they come to you while you are praying in Minnesota.

Civilization, wealth and technology provide the illusion of control that you do not have. Not over Putin. Not over Covid. Not over the lightning in the next thunder storm nor the sobriety of the person in the car that is coming your way. Not over the mentally ill or evil.

Then there is a discussion about free will, which we will not have, but I doubt that there is free will. (Since we can never know whether we have

free will, just live as if you do and everything comes out the same, either way. Actually, if there is no free will, you have no real decision to make and things get really complicated.)

There are three things we turn to when problems get too big: our parents, the government and god.

If you are reading this, you are old enough to know that parents are not powerful at all. There is an illusion of power created by perspective.

You also know that governments are corrupt, self-interested, bureaucratic and limited by votes and budgets. This is where you go for the gun control bit, or getting the mentally ill off the streets. How's that working for you?

But you pretty much know that most of the bad stuff is random and not controllable.

So, god is a good choice. Depending on your religion, (he) is omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent. That actually comes very close to what we Presbyterians (I'm actually lapsed) call predestination - another way of saying that there is no free will. (Once you choose those three omnis, you are stuck with the implications.)

We pretty much ignore all of that the same way essentially all Christians ignore the awkward bits of Jesus' teachings about heaven and hell and sheep and goats and the eyes of needles. Life boils down to coping and

ignoring reality - denial - is what humans do best. It really does make life better, most of the time.

Don't get me wrong. I think humans need religion, whether it is a god, wokeness or patriotism, and I think all we can do is all we can do. Life really does serve up some very bad things - and we don't live in Gaza or Sudan.

I also think shit happens and that often there is nowhere to go and nothing to be done except to be sorry for the recipient and thankful that you dodged that bullet - this time. (Whenever there is a tragedy where many die, one person does not and they say that god protected them, what does that say about god's attitude toward all the others who died? My point is that it is not required to be rational when you are seeking comfort. And we all need comfort traversing life.)

And offer thoughts and prayers, both to god and to the civil authorities.

With fingers crossed.

When overwhelmed by reality, all you can do is all you can do.

And it's ok.

Even if it does not include gun control.

Markets

Updated charts

> No change in outlook. I am continuing to look for a retracement in the stock market, followed by new highs. However, our financial system is so fragile, with new Trump-shocks almost daily, that it is teetering on a knife's edge. Lacy Hunt on the Thoughtful Money podcast, reiterated that he thinks a deflationary illiquidity process is our real economic threat here. But the Fed is taking far too long to respond adequately to address it. There are significant forces pulling in both directions. Trump's tariffs have put into motion huge, slow changes reordering our economy and the world economy.

So, You Say You Want A Revolution?

- > Federal court rules most of Trump's tariffs illegal.**
- > Judge finds Trump's LA troop deployment illegal.**
- > Trump asks for efficacy data on covid vaccines.**
- > Um, don't look now, but there is another government shutdown battle coming - September 30.**

> Harvard won a crucial legal victory in its clash with the Trump administration, when a federal judge said that the government had broken the law by freezing billions of dollars in research funds in the name of combating antisemitism.

> There is great irony in the raid on John Boulton's house on suspicion of harboring confidential documents.

How Does Trump Get Away With It?

We look at other countries and say, it will never happen here. We are a country ruled by laws and not men.

It is happening here.

Not just Trump's arbitrary authoritarianism, which is the subject of this piece, but hysteria and strife and riots and unchecked lawlessness, and loss of purpose.

When I began contemplating history, many of my major lessons came from the Roman Empire, the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution and Nazi Germany. That's how people are and if the sober, educated, yes, Christian, Germans could descend into hell, anybody could - including Americans.

I believed that firmly, while deep in my heart, I knew it would never happen to us.

Trump is being purposeful, arbitrary and acting on whims (moving the headquarters of Space Force from Colorado because of their mail-in ballots). He is increasingly acting arbitrarily and unconstitutionally. But, he gets away with it. What's going on?

Three things, I think.

First, Congress vacated the field a long time before Trump arrived. Given Trump's threats to primary anyone who disagrees with him, there is more incentive to not act. And you definitely don't want to get on Laura Loomer's bad side. She has the chance to take a place in history next to Lucrecia Borgia.

Second, he is going for forgiveness and not permission. He does something and it will take courts months to rule on its legality. During that time, he can get things under way and hope he gets a sympathetic judge.

Third are emergencies. There are myriad laws that grant the president extraordinary powers during emergencies. Trump sees emergencies everywhere (they are now talking about a housing emergency), declares

them and then moves ahead. It is then up to the courts to decide whether there is an actual emergency.

The next big test will be when the Supreme Court hears the tariffs case. Trump's implementation of tariffs has been arbitrary and chaotic, but Congress did give the presidency certain powers with regard to tariffs and the Executive has always taken the lead in foreign affairs.

As we have learned, it is not the Supreme Court's job to come up with what's right or good, but what follows the law. Often, but not always, these are the same things. So, Trump's acts have been arbitrary and chaotic, but have they been illegal? I think this is actually a close discussion. Imo they should be, but that's not the point.

The point is the one preached by our Founders - democracy requires virtue. You can push and torture and bribe and intimidate laws and institutions, and you can whip mobs into frenzies. If you do not have virtue, the rest does not matter.

I have predicted that the US would turn to a (man) on a white horse during this Fourth Turning. I have also said that Trump is not him. But Trump represents the beginning.

Short Takes

> Following on to last week's comments, this is an update on shootings in Chicago over the Labor Day weekend. This is a profound condemnation of our culture. Again, I don't support Trump's sending in troops, but the powers that be beg to differ: politicians like Illinois' lieutenant governor said the city is safe and everything is fine. It is not fine. We have identified the level of atrocity we are willing to live with.

- According to NBC 5 Chicago, 54 people were shot, 7 fatally.**
- According to the Chicago Tribune, 55 people were shot, 7 fatally, including 12 shot in two mass shootings.**
- According to the Chicago Sun-Times, 52 were wounded and nine were killed over the weekend.**

This weekend's gun violence was a significant jump from last year's late-summer holiday weekend, when eight people were killed and 22 wounded.

> The last Secretary of Energy was an idiot and this one is brain dead. We are so screwed.



Secretary Chris Wrig...   @SecretaryWrig... · 11h

Even if you wrapped the entire planet in a solar panel, you would only be producing 20% of global energy.

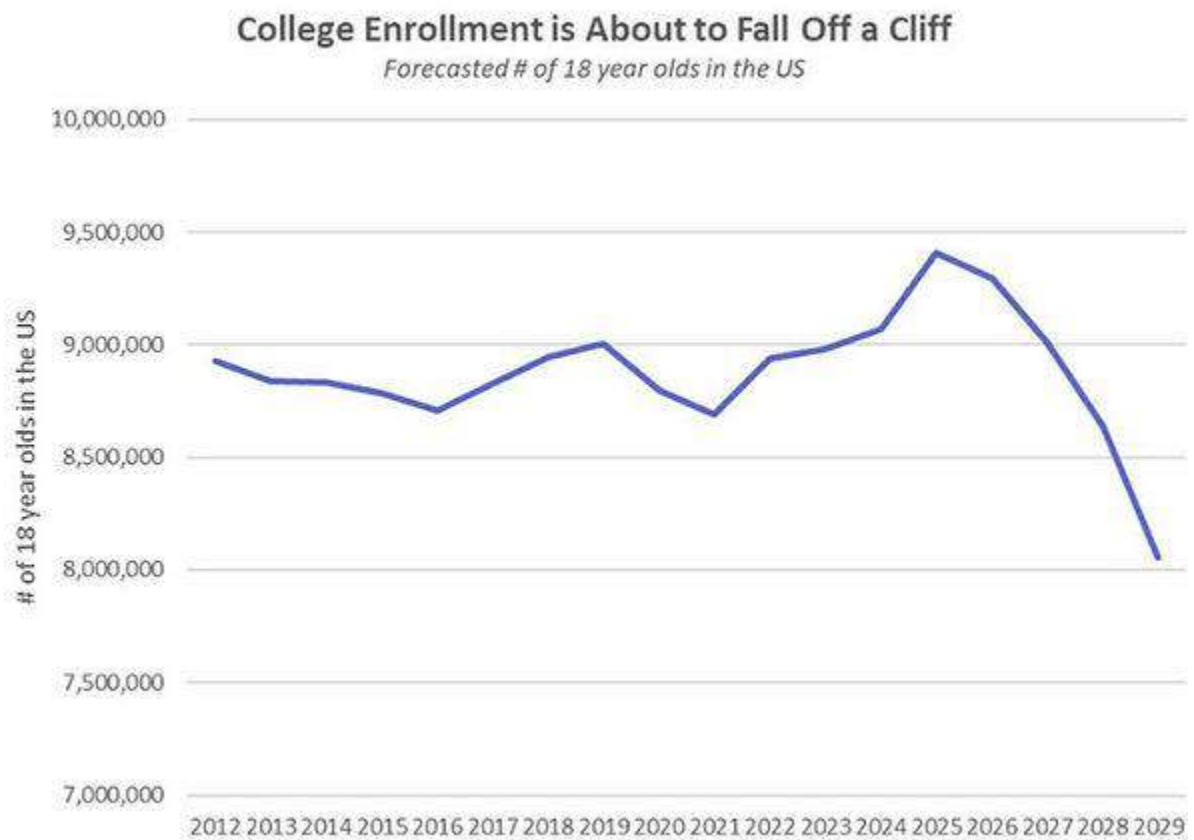
One of the biggest mistakes politicians can make is equating the ELECTRICITY with ENERGY!



Readers added context

The entire world's electricity needs would be met by a solar farm covering just 1-2% of the Sahara Desert - roughly size of Portugal.

Demographics is destiny.



Miscellany

Nicely said

