

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.

Tragedies

September 12, 2025

Quotes to Contemplate

Reality is that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn't go away. -

Philip Dick

The government is basically unfixable. - Elon Musk

Summary of Primary Thoughts To Contemplate In This Issue

The Democrats seem like they have decided to join Trump in a race to the bottom. 2028 will likely be ugly and nasty, and if a Democrat wins, they will likely out-Trump Trump in an effort to reverse everything he has done.

I have rarely been moved as I have been by the murder of the Ukrainian woman on the train in Charlotte.

The murder of Charlie Kirk is a tragedy and a symptom of our cultural sickness. Regardless of whether you agreed with him, he was one of the rare, good guys.

2028 And All Of That

Let's just free-associate for a while.

It's a thousand years in political years until the next presidential election.

Who knows what will happen - wars, economic collapse, inflation, all the above? Trump is 79 with cankles and large bruises on his hands.

Flocks of black swans on the horizon.

Let's review what we do know and then speculate on things we cannot know.

Trump is destroying every norm and relationship in the book. Some of this may or may not be a good thing, but he is taking apart the old world piece by piece - literally the entire old world. Decades radically changed almost overnight - slowly and then suddenly.

Trump is increasingly authoritarian and often acts on a whim.

The US is in extreme financial distress with debt, deficits and entitlements.

China is ascendent and is basically holding the US hostage.

Democrats are in complete disarray. Their old policies of wokism and identity have failed. They need a new platform, a new coalition and new leadership.

The GOP is basically non-existent. The party in opposition to the Democrats is the Trump party - to a large extent, a cult of personality. When Trump is gone, they will need a new platform, a new coalition and new leadership.

The country is horribly fragmented along several lines. While gender and racial lines may be losing their definitions, they still remain. The gulf between rich and poor continues to widen.

We are in the midst of the ending of a Fourth Turning that should not be completed by 2028. My view is that 2028 will define the path to the end.

Political scientists have a technical term for our current condition - shitshow.

By 2028, many political issues will have sorted themselves out. Trump will have acted, the courts will have ruled, and Trump will have followed the court's orders or not. For better and for worse, there may be some kind of strange stability. Trump will have done his thing and we will be awaiting the next election.

Democrats will be very unhappy. While Trump may have lost some cases, given the gray areas of the law and Congressional inaction, he will probably have won a fair share.

While the Trump/courts process may have reached a strange stability, Democrats will be angry and "out for blood." The political contests will be no-holds-barred. They will be out to reverse almost every action Trump has taken. There is a high probability that financial conditions will have worsened significantly, leading to social instability.

Newsome is already fighting fire with fire - becoming more Trump-like and aggressive and misleading in his statements.

Imo this presages a race to the bottom - nastiness and pettiness on top of nastiness and pettiness - probably with some violence.

If Democrats win, I would expect them to undo Trumpian things using Trumpian tactics. The trend of increasing authoritarianism will continue.

At some point, this will come to a climax and we will begin rebuilding out of whatever is left.

But not in 2028. In 2028 we will still be tearing down.

Markets

Updated charts

> Everyone I respect in discussing the markets is looking for very nasty things to happen. We are at the end of a move up. The question is, will the downward move be normal or ugly?

So, You Say You Want A Revolution?

> From Twitter/X, if you are going to rename the Department of Defense as the Department of War, consider the following:

HHS -> Dept of Welfare

Education -> Dept of Indoctrination

DHS -> Dept of Surveillance

Labor/Commerce -> Dept of Cronyism

Treasury -> Dept of Taxation

Fed -> Dept of Bailouts

> Headline from The Economist - A new theory of China's rise: ruled by engineers - As opposed to America, which is ruled by lawyers

> E. Jean Carroll's \$83 million judgment against Trump is upheld in court.

> Mail volume plunges 80% as Trump puts tariffs on Chinese ecommerce.

> Pentagon officials are proposing the department prioritize protecting the homeland and Western Hemisphere, a striking reversal from the military's yearslong mandate to focus on the threat from China. A draft of the newest National Defense Strategy, which landed on Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's desk last week, places domestic and regional missions above countering adversaries such as Beijing and Moscow.

Commentary by "Collingwood:" Looks like Elbridge Colby, the arch Realist who literally wrote the book on containing China, and whom I believe wrote this, has made his assessment of US capabilities and the geostrategic balance of power, and decided that the US cannot realistically hold the line in the Western Pacific to contain China.

Instead, it must focus on controlling the Western Hemisphere in a neo-Monroe Doctrine. If this is accurate, then it is difficult to overstate just how far behind the curve the mainstream commentariat—and the UK foreign policy establishment—is. They are still arguing about how the US could best split its resources to take on Russia in Ukraine and Iran in the Middle East AS WELL AS containing China in the Western Pacific.

Short Takes

> A record 45% of high school seniors scored “below basic” in math, and nearly 1 in 3 were “below basic” in reading, new national data from 2024 shows.

> (Although it is our culture in miniature, I am not making a political statement.) We live in a world where instant communications let us know about daily tragedies in Gaza and Ukraine and Sudan, much less the continual death toll in Chicago, or even Austin. It is literally too much. Sometimes, however, there is one picture that stands out. I was stricken to the depth of my soul by the picture of the Ukrainian woman on the Charlotte train crying after having been stabbed. I wonder if she knew she was dying.

The loneliness and abject sadness are overwhelming.



> And then Charlie Kirk was killed. I only followed him peripherally - I am not a MAGA guy. He seemed like he was one of the good guys - good, honest, sincere, whether you agreed with him politically or not. Always calm, always rational, espousing the conservative view on college campuses, engaging constructively.

We don't have enough good guys of any persuasion to be losing any.

And then, the killer was turned in by his father. I can't imagine.

Miscellany

