

Thoughts on Coming Apart and the Coming Great Reset



**Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer**

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The Road to Civil War?

February 28, 2025

Themes and Theses - Why I'm Contemplating Out Loud

(Initially formulated in the early 90s, following decades of reading history, philosophy, 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 not yet to the middle 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.

(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.

Quotes to Contemplate

Any great power that spends more in interest payments on its debt than on defense will not be great for long. - (Niall) Ferguson's Law

Some of his (Trump's) actions are exhilarating. Some of them make you ask: Are these people clinically insane? - Peggy Noonan

At the moment, almost half the population of the developing world—three billion people—annually uses less electricity per capita than the average American refrigerator does. - Yergin, et al

> Primary Ideas in This Week's Post

Talk of civil war is premature.

We are in the midst of what could be an interesting downturn in markets.

I believe that the US dollar has begun its devaluation.

Trump chaos continues. He is becoming increasingly irresponsible with foreign affairs.

The Epstein thing is (so far) a farce, and the first credibility problem with Trump's base. Bondi is off to a bad start.

We are at a very dangerous point with Iran and its nuclear program - if the US and Israel are going to take it out, it is getting to be now or never.

An unvaccinated child died of measles in a Texas outbreak. This won't be the last as the tragic results of the incompetent handling of the Covid "vaccine" and the emergence of RFK Jr are wreaking havoc with one of the great accomplishments of the modern era.

The Road to Civil War

RL sent me a link to a British podcast that contemplated the possibility of civil war in Britain, and in Western countries more generally, and I took a listen. (You can find it [here](#).) It got me to review my various themes on the subject, which I will summarize here.

The odds of a civil war anywhere in the Western world, today, are small. I thought the host had a great comment that went something like, "I would have thought that we were too rich and too fat to have a civil war. Civil wars are more for youth that have nothing to lose."

This is a Fourth Turning, and if we are going to do it, some time in the next decade would be as good a time as any.

I have thought a great deal about what it is that holds a nation together, and I'm not sure I know. Or rather, there are a lot of things.

Another interesting topic is, what does it take to have a civil war? It's like a divorce where two people who were "in love" or at least cohabiting amiably all of a sudden can't stand each other. Something or some number of things create a phase shift where the universe is rearranged and turned on its head. The US lived with slavery for over 200 years and then it decided not to any longer, and, more than that, to go to war.

Gradually and then suddenly.

Signs of dissolution are everywhere - US, UK, Germany, France. All-against-all in an orgy of masochism and madness.

I think phase change, like water turning into ice, is a good metaphor, but maybe the game of Jenga is the better analogy.

We have built this structure of shared history, institutions and myths, and now it is being dismantled, piece by piece. Riots! Nope, it held together. Statues down! Still standing. Identity politics! Hanging in there. Going for the lowest common denominator in education! Didn't miss a beat. Rule of law disintegrating! Starting to shake, but still standing. Trump! Really shaking now.

It is possible, even likely, that the removal of an otherwise-inconsequential piece will bring the entire structure down - the Jenga equivalent of the Black Swan.

But who is going to fight whom? Antifa and BLM are our rioting groups, but really don't comprise that many people. It was important that, even when the law stepped aside during their riots, there was little to no vigilante resistance to them. White supremacist groups are actually pathetic in their numbers. I live in conservative Texas and liberal Austin. Not clear which side people will be on.

The numbers aren't exact, but it only takes a motivated, perhaps 20% of the population to get a revolution going. Even though that does not seem like many, it actually requires a lot of effort to mobilize 20%. Most people just want to live their lives and will put up with a lot of crap just to be left alone.

Ironically, revolutions often start in the upper classes, which mobilizes the peasants. If you look at the Russian, French and American revolutions, you wind up with three different models, but they were all led by "elites."

So, what's the bottom line?

IMO, civil war is unlikely, but will grow more likely over time as internal conflict increases and as living standards decrease, creating a collective bad mood. We will have to re-form our institutions and might wind up re-aligning geographically. Parts of Oregon want to join Idaho; parts of Illinois want out; parts of Canada, the mid-western parts, might actually be happier as part of the US. There is always talk of Texas seceding, but I have not seen any evidence of any serious activity toward secession.

If I were to bet on a dividing line for this unlikely civil war, it would be rural/conservative vs urban/liberal. Austin would wind up being in the wrong place.

But, we have a lot of road to cover first.

Markets

[Updated Charts](#)

- > My calls on tops in the stock market, the dollar and bitcoin, and continuing weakness in oil continue to go well. This downturn in the stock markets could turn out to be nasty.
- > Freddie Mac (Housing) delinquencies are now higher than 2008.

So, You Say You Want A Revolution?

- > The empire strikes back - including litigation as far as the eye can see.
- The Supreme Court ruled that Trump cannot remove the head of an agency that protects government whistle-blowers — for now. But it may revisit the case soon.
- A federal judge blocked President Donald Trump's bid to deprive federal funding from programs that incorporate "diversity, equity and inclusion" initiatives. U.S. District Judge Adam Abelson ruled that Trump's policy likely violates the First Amendment because it penalizes private organizations based on their viewpoints. And the judge said the policy is written so vaguely that it chills the free speech of federal contractors concerned they will be punished if they don't eliminate programs meant to encourage a diverse workforce.

- A judge has blocked DOGE from accessing Education Department records.
- The Supreme Court paused an order to resume \$2 billion in USAID payments. A lower court had given the Trump administration until midnight last night to restart the payments. But, shortly before the deadline, the chief justice intervened.
- A judge has blocked mass firings of US federal workers
- > I'm shocked! Shocked! The Epstein release was "phase 1." Trump couldn't bring himself to do it, either. This could be Trump's first, big credibility issue among his base. Bondi is off to a bad start.
- > Trump did a u-turn on Ukraine, responding to the question, do you still think Zelensky is a dictator, with "Did I say that? I don't recall." My guess that it is all Trump kabuki surrounding the now-done mineral deal. Then, he had a shouting match with Zelensky when they met.
- > The Trump administration fired several top Pentagon officials, including the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the head of the Navy and the vice chief of the Air Force. Details of the fascinating saga surrounding this are in an article at the bottom of this post.
- > Uh oh. I said that if they are willing to audit Fort Knox then everything is ok, because they already know the answer. Then the Secretary of the Treasury said that Fort Knox was audited in 2024, implying no public audit. The plot thickens.
- > Trump has issued a "stop work" order to NOAA and USGCRP federal scientists on UN IPCC climate assessment related activities.
- > US threatens to shut off Starlink if Ukraine won't sign minerals deal, sources tell Reuters.
- > President Trump calls MSNBC a threat to democracy.
- > Elon Musk ordered federal workers to send an email detailing their accomplishments last week or lose their jobs. Some agencies, including the F.B.I. and the State Department, told employees to hold off. FBI chief Kash Patel tells staff to ignore Elon Musk's email to federal staff demanding they explain what they accomplished last week.
- > Maine is facing a federal investigation after it refused to comply with Trump's executive order banning transgender athletes from women's sports. Its governor told Trump, "See you in court."
- > Sometimes, I think he is just having fun with us -Trump names Dan Bongino as Deputy Director of the FBI.
- > Trump said Monday the plan for 25% tariffs on most Canadian goods is still very much alive and will start next week.
- > The United Nations General Assembly on Monday adopted a Ukrainian- and European-backed resolution condemning Russia's invasion on the third anniversary of the war's start. The United States—along with North Korea, Hungary, Haiti, Israel, and 12 other countries—joined Russia in voting against the measure, while China, Iran, and Argentina were among the 65 that abstained.

- > Ukraine strikes minerals deal with US, gets no security guarantees. Ukraine agrees to give 50% of future mineral revenue to a joint fund under a new deal with the US.
- > Particularly disturbing - The White House said Tuesday that it will take control of the White House press pool – a rotating group of journalists given access to briefings and the ability to ask the president questions.
- > Trump plans to create a “gold card” alternative to green cards for “high level people.” He said the price tag would be about \$5 million.
- > Seems right - at least for a while - “I don’t think we’re going back to the one we had before.” That was the prognostication of Alex Younger, a former chief of Britain’s foreign intelligence service MI6, whose remarks last week during BBC’s “Newsnight” on the state of the international order in President Donald Trump’s second term went somewhat viral. “We are in a new era where, by and large, international relations aren’t going to be determined by rules and multilateral institutions,” Younger said. “They’re going to be determined by strongmen and deals ... That’s Donald Trump’s mindset, certainly [Russian President Vladimir] Putin’s mindset. It’s [Chinese President] Xi Jinping’s mindset.”
- > Donald Trump Jr.: “I honestly can’t imagine that anyone in their right mind would be picking Ukraine as an ally when Russia is the other option, the US should have been sending weapons to Russia.”
- > Just a reminder that "rare earths" aren't particularly rare. Processing them is rare and environmentally challenging and mostly done in China.
- > I'm missing something - exactly which celebrities left the US when Trump was elected? The only one I know of is Ellen DeGeneres, who moved to England and her house flooded.
- > "The European Union was formed in order to screw the United States. That is the purpose of it." - Trump
- > Trump quietly shuts online form for student debt repayment.
- > The Trump administration has given the US armed forces 30 days to identify and discharge any transgender service members.

Short Takes

- > It appears that Iran's nuclear capabilities are progressing at a rate such that it is now or never if they are to be taken out militarily. Extraordinarily dangerous.
- > An unvaccinated child died of measles in a Texas outbreak. There were a lot of bad outcomes from the way the Covid "vaccine" was handled, but a tragic, and stupid, outcome is the current movement against all vaccines, whose participants include RFK Jr.
- > China discovers a new coronavirus with "pandemic potential."
- > If the U.S. gets rid of pennies, it might want to consider scrapping nickels, too: The five-cent pieces cost about 14 cents to make.

- > A federal appeals court delivered a crushing blow Tuesday to a more than \$475 billion student debt cancellation program begun by former President Joe Biden, ordering the underlying regulation be blocked in its entirety.
- > As if we needed another dimension in which to divide ourselves - gender and ideology.



- > That asteroid, now down to .004% chance of hitting us.
- An “unknown disease” that kills those it infects within days is spreading through the Congo and has killed 53 people. The disease originated in a small, remote village, where three young children ate an infected bat carcass.

Miscellany

Ok, this one is good –



Great news



The Babylon Bee 🟡 @TheBabylonBee · 52m

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God Confirms Heaven Will Have A Buc-ee's buff.ly/3ZsmZGO



Trump Fires Joint Chiefs of Staff After Alleged Coup Plot Exposed by James O'Keefe Video

By: Collin Campbell

[@ProjectConstitu](https://x.com/ProjectConstitu)

(Watch The Video Here)

<https://x.com/ProjectConstitu/status/1893527590087852473>

Feb 22, 2025 - Washington, D.C. In a stunning and unprecedented move, President Donald Trump has fired the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the highest-ranking military officers in the United States, following allegations of a plot to undermine his authority. The dramatic shakeup, announced late Friday night, February 21, 2025, stems from a controversial video released by investigative journalist James O'Keefe on January 15,

2025, which purportedly exposed a high-level Pentagon official discussing secret meetings to defy and potentially overthrow Trump if he issued orders deemed controversial by military leadership. The firings have ignited a firestorm of debate, with some hailing it as a bold defense of civilian control over the military, while others decry it as a dangerous politicization of the armed forces.

The O’Keefe Video: A Bombshell Revelation

The saga began on January 15, 2025, when O’Keefe Media Group (OMG) released undercover footage featuring Jamie Mannina, a senior advisor to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and former FBI special agent. In the video, Mannina, employed by defense contractor Booz Allen Hamilton, was recorded speaking with an undercover OMG journalist. He allegedly admitted to participating in a “huge meeting with military leaders” in a secure Pentagon room known as “The Tank,” a Sensitive Compartmentalized Information Facility (SCIF). According to Mannina, these discussions involved retired generals—some as high-ranking as four-star officers—and focused on strategies to “protect people from Trump” and explore “what we can do” to counter his incoming administration.

Mannina’s statements painted a picture of a clandestine effort within the military establishment to resist Trump’s authority. He claimed to have been in conversations with retired generals since the spring of 2024, working through a 501(c)(4) organization to obscure their involvement. “This organization tried to defeat Donald Trump,” Mannina said, adding that he had ghostwritten over 100 opinion columns for generals to sway public opinion against Trump during the election cycle. He also expressed concerns about Trump’s potential orders, suggesting the military might need to act to preserve national security or democratic norms.

The confrontation that followed was equally explosive. O’Keefe ambushed Mannina outside a Washington, D.C., restaurant, presenting him with the footage. Mannina reacted angrily, shouting, “Get the f*** out of here!” and calling O’Keefe a “known liar” and “fraud,” though he failed to specify any inaccuracies when pressed. Within hours, the Pentagon confirmed Mannina’s termination from his contracted role, with Joint Staff Public Affairs Spokesman Joseph Holstead stating that his views did not reflect those of the military leadership.

Trump’s Response: A Swift and Decisive Purge

The January video set off alarm bells within Trump’s transition team, already wary of “deep state” resistance from his first term. Sources close to the administration suggest that the footage fueled suspicions of a broader conspiracy within the Pentagon. By February 21, 2025, just over a month into his second term, Trump acted decisively. In a Truth Social post, he announced the firing of General Charles “CQ” Brown, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, thanking him for his 40 years of service but offering no specific reason for the dismissal. Minutes later, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth followed with a statement confirming the removal of Chief of Naval

Operations Admiral Lisa Franchetti, Air Force Vice Chief of Staff General James Slife, and the Judge Advocates General for the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

Reports indicate that Trump's team linked the alleged plot to a faction of military leaders perceived as loyal to former Chairman Mark Milley, whom Trump has long criticized. Milley, who retired in 2023, was quoted in Bob Woodward's 2024 book *War* calling Trump "fascist to the core," a statement that deepened the rift between Trump and the military establishment. A source familiar with the transition told Reuters that the administration aimed to purge "every single person elevated and appointed by Milley," suggesting the firings were part of a broader effort to root out perceived disloyalty.

Trump nominated retired Air Force Lieutenant General Dan "Razin" Caine to replace Brown, an unusual choice given Caine's retirement status and lower rank as a three-star general. Trump praised Caine as a "warfighter" instrumental in defeating ISIS, recalling a 2018 meeting in Iraq where Caine allegedly promised to annihilate the caliphate in a week. Hegseth echoed this sentiment, calling Caine the "leader we need to meet the moment."

The Alleged Coup Plot: Fact or Fabrication?

The O'Keefe video has been both celebrated and condemned. Supporters on X, including posts from prominent conservative voices, hailed it as proof of a "deep state coup" against Trump. One widely shared post claimed, "Top Pentagon Advisor FIRED After Revealing Plot To 'Protect People From Trump!'" accompanied by clips of Mannina's admissions. Others pointed to his mention of "The Tank" meetings as evidence of a coordinated effort to defy Trump's orders, potentially constituting a "soft coup"—a term used to describe non-violent subversion of elected authority.

Critics, however, question the video's context and O'Keefe's credibility. Mannina's statements, while provocative, lack specific details about actionable plans, and some argue they reflect personal frustrations rather than an organized conspiracy. The Joint Staff clarified that Mannina was not an advisor to General Brown or the Joint Chiefs directly, but rather a contractor in the J6 C4 & Cyber division. Skeptics on X and in mainstream outlets like CNN have accused O'Keefe of selective editing, a critique leveled at his past work with Project Veritas. Still, the Pentagon's swift firing of Mannina lent credence to the video's impact, if not its full narrative.

Fallout and Reaction

The firings have sent shockwaves through Washington. General Brown, a decorated F-16 pilot and the second Black chairman of the Joint Chiefs, was seen as a stabilizing figure, despite criticism from Trump allies for his focus on diversity initiatives.

Admiral Franchetti, the first woman to lead the Navy, and General Slife were also historic appointees, making their removals a symbolic rejection of what Hegseth has called "woke" military leadership. In his 2024 book *The War on Warriors*, Hegseth accused Brown of prioritizing diversity over readiness and had called for his ouster before taking office.

Lawmakers and former officials have sounded the alarm. Representative Adam Smith (D-Wash.) called Brown's firing "completely unjustified," warning it weakens America. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.), a former Army National Guard soldier, labeled it "the work of a wanna-be dictator," suggesting Trump aims to install "yes-men" loyal to him rather than the Constitution. Conversely, Trump allies like Vice President J.D. Vance cheered the move, with posts on X proclaiming it a step toward "making our military great again" by purging "woke generals."

The broader implications are staggering. The Joint Chiefs advise the president and defense secretary on military matters, and their abrupt removal—along with the top military lawyers—raises questions about command continuity amid global tensions, including wars in Ukraine and the Middle East. Some speculate the firings tie to Trump's "America First" agenda, which may involve controversial orders—like border deployments or withdrawals from overseas bases—that military leaders might resist.

What's Next?

As of 08:17 PM PST on February 22, 2025, the Pentagon is reeling from the purge. Hegseth has promised to announce replacements for Franchetti, Slife, and the Judge Advocates General soon, while Caine's nomination awaits Senate confirmation. Posts on X reflect a polarized public, with trending sentiments ranging from "Trump just saved democracy" to "This is how dictatorships begin." The O'Keefe video, now viewed millions of times, continues to fuel speculation about further tapes, with O'Keefe hinting at additional exposés targeting other agencies.