

Chapter 1 : The Council That Wasn't | Catholic Answers

There is the authority of parent over the small child, of the priest over the communicant, the teacher over the pupil, the master over the apprentice, and so on. Society is a network or tissue of such authorities; authority may be loose, gentle, protective, and designed to produce individuality, but it is authority nevertheless.

March 13, , 9: We asked several China hands for their take: Whether these cracks will lead to the end of CCP rule, nevertheless, is difficult to predict. The prediction about a CCP endgame this time might end up like the many unrealized predictions before. It may also be like the story of boy crying wolf: The bottom line is, the CCP is facing very tough challenges. Whether and how it can weather them is uncertain. Xi is a leader who came to power with very few sources of legitimacy. Deng handpicked his successors Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao – both of whom got the backing of party elders when they came to power. Xi, despite his princeling background, is the first leader chosen out of a delicate compromise among party factions. What Wang actually told the American diplomats during his sleepover in the U. But the rumor that he revealed a plot by other princelings to get rid of Xi through a coup does not sound too crazy. Such internal coup against unpopular leaders is not alien to the CCP – it happened with the downfall of the Gang of Four in , and former party chairman Hua Guofeng a few years later. But with the soaring indebtedness of the Chinese economy and the ever aggravating unemployment problem, the Chinese economy needs higher-speed growth to stay above water. The debt hangover of the stimulus is worrying. It is at a dangerously high level compared to other emerging economies. The economic slowdown will lead to profit decline for companies and revenue shortfall for local governments, increasing their difficulty in servicing and repaying debts. A vicious cycle of defaults and further growth deceleration could turn a slowdown into something uglier. It is possible that the CCP elite, no matter how much they dislike Xi and his anti-corruption campaign, will still prefer not to rock the boat. They are aware that they are nobody without the protection of the party-state, and their privileges will be under far greater threat in the wake of a regime collapse. Is Xi successfully increasing his grip of power through the anti-corruption campaign, or does his rule still suffer from inadequate legitimacy behind the mask of invincibility? Only time can tell. But besides the endgame of CCP rule, we should also ponder another possible scenario: Perhaps we can call this hypothetical regime North Korea lite. Neither China nor its Communist Party is cracking up. I have three reasons for this judgment. First, none of the factors Shambaugh cites strongly supports the crackup case. Third, the forces that might push for systemic political change are far weaker than the party. Shambaugh thinks the system is on its last legs because rich people are moving assets abroad, Xi is cracking down on the media and academia, officials look bored in meetings, corruption is rife, and the economy is at an impasse. This is not a persuasive case. But in aggregate, capital outflows are modest, and plenty of rich Chinese are still investing in their own economy. Following an easing of rules, new private business registrations rose 45 percent in – scarcely a sign that the entrepreneurial class has given up hope. The crackdown on free expression and civil society is deeply distressing, but not necessarily a sign of weakness. It is also related to the crackdown on corruption, which Shambaugh wrongly dismisses as a cynical power play. A relentless drive to limit corruption was essential to stabilize the system, and this is precisely what Xi has delivered. It cannot work unless Xi can demonstrate complete control over all aspects of the political system, including ideology. And claims that the reform program is sputtering simply do not square with the facts. News reports suggest that we will soon see a program to reorganize big SOEs under Temasek-like holding companies that will focus on improving their flagging financial returns. These are all material achievements and compare favorably to, for instance, the utter failure of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to progress on any of the reform agenda he outlined for his country two years ago. Finally, there is no evidence that the biggest and most important political constituency in China – the rising urban bourgeoisie – has much interest in changing the system. In my conversations with members of this class, I hear many complaints, but more generally a satisfaction with the material progress China has made in the last two

decades. Except for a tiny group of brave dissidents, this group in general displays little interest in political reform and none in democracy. One reason may be that they find uninspiring the record of democratic governance in other big Asian countries, such as India. More important is probably the fear that in a representative system, the interests of the urban bourgeoisie at most 25 percent of the population would lose out to those of the rural masses. The party may well be somewhat insecure, but the only force that might plausibly unseat it is more insecure still. Predictions of Chinese political collapse have a long and futile history. Their persistent failure stems from a basic conceptual fault. Instead of facing the Chinese system on its own terms and understanding why it works – which could create insights into why it might stop working – critics judge the system against what they would like it to be, and find it wanting. This embeds an assumption of fragility that makes every societal problem look like an existential crisis. As a long-term resident of China, I would love the government to become more open, pluralistic and tolerant of creativity. That it refuses to do so is disappointing to me and many others, but offers no grounds for a judgment of its weakness. To be sure, it has its problems and challenges, but none present the real possibility of systemic collapse. With respect to Shambaugh, what has interested me most in this matter is the response to what amounts to a carefully hedged prognostication, rather than his specific arguments in and of themselves. It has been fascinating to watch what strikes this observer, at least, as a certain betrayal of anxiety in the efforts of some of those who have rushed to take Shambaugh down, or at least refute and discredit his arguments. This extends, of course, to the limited Chinese responses we have seen so far, such as that of the *Global Times*, which has responded with vilification, forgetting perhaps that for decades a cherished recurrent theme in Chinese propaganda has been the fundamentally flawed nature of Western democracy or capitalism, and, of course, its inevitable demise. Few among the first wave of critics credited him for his scholarship, other than to note that he is prominent or respected within the academy. *Atrophy and Adaptation*, a careful study of how the party responded to the shock of the fall of the Soviet Union and began reinventing itself. Shambaugh gives enormous credit to the CCP for these efforts, but it is clear that by the time he published his book, *China Goes Global: Perhaps the next most important point to be made* – and it has not been heard enough in this discussion – is that no one knows where China or the world is heading 20, or even 10, years down the road. Mao oversaw rapprochement with the United States in order to counter the Soviet Union, and this can be said to have brought capitalism to his country, which was clearly not his aim. Former paramount leader Deng Xiaoping embraced capitalism, and that can be said to have led to a near existential crisis for the party around the issue of democratization. The United States embraced China also in order to balance the Soviet Union, as well as, a bit later, to seek markets. This ended up creating what now appears ever more like a peer rival, after a brief period of unipolarity. Unintended, even undesirable consequences are the name of the game in matters of state and in international affairs, and however assertive and determined Xi may appear to us in the early phases of his rule, it is a safe bet that his drive to realize a Chinese dream will produce many things he could never have dreamed of – or desired. That period consisted in large measure of stopping doing stupid things and inflicting damage on oneself. Moving forward now from here becomes exponentially more difficult. This means finding a way to sustain relatively high growth rates, when almost everything points to a natural, secular slowdown. It means coping with environmental challenges on a scale never seen before. It means dealing with the emergence of a middle class, and everything that political science suggests about the difficulties that this poses for authoritarian regimes. It means finding a way through the middle-income trap. It means restraining corruption that is, if anything, even worse, meaning more systemic, than commonly recognized. It means coping with the accelerating balancing of nervous neighbors. It means coping with issues of ethnic and regional tensions and stark inequality. It means drastic and mostly unfavorable changes in demography. For every success one can point to involving China, it is easy to point to at least one stark and serious problem, or potential failing. Such is the degree of uncertainty we must all live with. Yes, the CCP regime is in crisis. But it has muddled through one crisis after another, including the catastrophes of the chaotic, decade-long Cultural Revolution and the Tiananmen crackdown, by tackling its symptoms. It is too

difficult to predict the arrival of the cracking up moment now. This current crisis comes after more than three decades of market-oriented economic reform under one-party rule, which has produced a corruptive brand of state capitalism in which power and money ally. The government officials and senior managers in state-owned enterprises SOEs have formed strong and exclusive interest groups to pursue economic gains. China ranks among the countries of the highest income inequality in the world at a time when China has dismantled its social welfare state, leaving hundreds of millions of citizens without any or adequate provision of healthcare, unemployment insurance, and a variety of other social services. As the worsening economic, social, and environmental problems cause deep discontent across society and lead many people to take to the streets in protest, China has entered a period of deepening social tensions. Apparently, Beijing is frightened and has relied more and more on coercive forces. The authority crisis called for the creation of an authoritarian state through revolution and nationalism. The Chinese communist revolution was a collective assertion for the new form of authority and a strong state to build a prosperous Chinese nation. The very essence of CCP legitimacy was partly based upon its ability to establish a powerful state as an organizing and mobilizing force to defend the national independence and launch modernization programs. Taking strong measures to strengthen central Party and government authority, he set up new and powerful small leadership groups, such as the Central National Security Commission and the Comprehensive Deepening Economic Reform Small Group, with himself as the head. Looking to Mao for inspiration to manage the country, he launched the largest rectification and mass line campaigns in decades to fight corruption. Whether or not empowering the authoritarian state is a long-term solution to the current crisis, it seems to have targeted some of its symptoms and temporarily silenced its liberal critics inside China. As a result, it may help postpone the arrival of a cracking up moment “ at least for now.

American parents today face a perfect storm of cultural and social circumstances that undermine the very foundations of parental authority. In response, mothers and fathers are beginning to see therapists as irrelevant and to challenge the entire social, educational, and economic context of childrearing.

Infrastructure and energy Public safety In the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center complex, developers, policymakers, and ordinary New Yorkers broadly agreed that the site should be rebuilt and that whatever rose in place of the Twin Towers should be ambitious—and certainly tall. Fourteen years and countless borrowed dollars later, the project is near completion. Established in an effort to quell the perennial squabbling between New York and New Jersey over control of New York Harbor, the Port Authority was designed to be unaccountable to the public. Its originators, steeped in Progressive-era faith in technocratic management, envisioned an agency run by disinterested professionals, insulated from the pressures of day-to-day politics. In the 94 years since its founding, however, the Port Authority has proved anything but politically disinterested. Almost a century into its history, the Port Authority has grown into a gargantuan apparatus of inefficiency, overreach, corruption, and waste. How a relatively modest initiative to standardize rates of cross-Hudson freightage developed into a massive, financially opaque institution—with a mission that has expanded well beyond its original scope—is partially a function of the late-nineteenth-century cult of expertise. Ruled by a board of commissioners appointed by the governors of New York and New Jersey, the Port Authority ostensibly operates free from the day-to-day concerns and petty rivalries of local governance. Despite these noble intentions, however, the Port Authority has long since become a swamp of mysterious accounting practices, patronage, favoritism, self-dealing, and mission creep. Simply put, profitable divisions of the conglomerate subsidize the less successful ones—meaning that reforming any part of the Port Authority will affect in some way its other parts. The primary generators of cash in the Port Authority portfolio are its three main airports: Kennedy, LaGuardia, and Newark. These figures are net and account for operating and capital expenses. The PATH has high fixed costs for personnel and maintenance and mostly static revenues. Unlike most major American commuter rail systems, the PATH receives zero subsidies from the tax base. Since raising fares to match the real cost of ridership is politically infeasible, the PATH is essentially subsidized by the tolls and fees levied on bridge crossers and airplane travelers. They also approved the location of the World Trade Center complex on the west side of Manhattan, on land owned by the railroad. The Port Authority thus reluctantly took on ownership and maintenance of a failed commuter rail system, in order to build a trade complex that, even then, was projected to be revenue-neutral, at best. The original designs for the wings appeared impressive: But architectural sketches and models are notoriously unreliable in their representation of scale and point of view. What might have appeared soaring and majestic in an empty plaza is diminished, truncated, and dismal when crammed between a set of 1,foot skyscrapers. Meanwhile, leaks in the structure have damaged retail spaces in the mall that is still in ovo beneath the roosting architectonic bird, thereby pushing the opening date for the complex from late to mid Somewhat reminiscent of the interior scenes in Outright corruption is a real problem as well. Sartor resigned from the committee in , following an investigation into dealings that his company had with other firms with Port Authority contracts. The Wall Street Journal reported that, while Sartor did recuse himself from votes of the full board of the Port Authority in matters touching on conflicts of interest, he nevertheless participated in the negotiations leading up to the votes, which were a formality, in any case, as they were almost always unanimous. Another Port Authority commissioner, Chairman David Samson, a former New Jersey attorney general appointed to the Port Authority by Governor Chris Christie, resigned after facing accusations of conflicts of interest and self-dealing pertaining to his legal practice. The Newark-Columbia route operated just twice a week: For example, in , with the approval of then-New York governor Eliot Spitzer, the Port Authority moved to expand itself well beyond its historical scope when it agreed to purchase

the operating lease of sleepy Stewart International Airport, 60 miles north of Manhattan. Stewart had made news in as the first American airport to be privatized, when New York State sold its lease to National Express Group, a British transit company. Atlantic City, where casino gambling was legalized in a s attempt at revitalization, is a city on the verge of economic collapse. Four major casinos closed in , and gambling revenues are half of what they were eight years ago. Empty lots dot its famed boardwalk, and urban blight surfaces just one block inland from the sea. The Port Authority entered talks with Air Canada to introduce a Torontoâ€”Atlantic City routeâ€”on the condition that the state of New Jersey subsidize the route, effectively indemnifying Air Canada from any loss. United Airlines agreed to begin flying into Atlantic City but backed out when it became clear that there was not enough demand to justify serving the South Jersey coast. The Port Authority declined my requests for comment on why it had sought to assume partial control of the Atlantic City airport. Outlying airports such as ACY can also serve local areas, build up local economies and expand the offering of air travel options. The skyway connects Newark to the Holland Tunnel and is thus only tangentially related to Port Authority operations and, in any case, is owned and managed by the New Jersey Department of Transportation. The Securities and Exchange Commission is investigating the diversion of funds from the bond offering for other purposes, and the Federal Aviation Authority is following up a complaint by United Airlines that, through the steep fees it pays to land at Newark Airport, it is subsidizing non-aviation-related projects. All this overextension can obscure the fact that, even with the assets that form the core of its portfolio, the Port Authority is a managerial mess. Finally, in , it appeared that the renovation project was nearly under way. In , Cuomo and Vice President Biden announced a new plan: The new LaGuardia would have more modern terminals, better baggage-handling facilities, and expanded taxiways. What it would not have, however, are longer or additional runways, which are the primary cause of delays. With financial mismanagement such a regular refrain, it should come as no surprise that the Port Authority has been borrowing billions of dollars to fund its current operations, and is deep in debt. The PA plans to raise part of the money needed for these major projects and also to fund ongoing expenses through toll increases. Figuring out where to begin reforming the Port Authority is almost as vexing as imagining where to end. Some form of revenue-sharing would be necessary for the bridges and tunnels, though the two states might find themselves back where they started years ago, bickering over haulage-cost details. Making any of these major restructuring plans work would require enormous political willâ€”and imagination. Again, many Port Authority units are economically unsustainable, relying on revenue from other parts of the conglomerate, meaning that any breakup would produce real winners and losers. New York and New Jersey have different credit ratings and different outstanding debt obligations. Short of dismantling the Port Authority, major reforms could be pursued within the existing structure. With their eleventh-hour intervention, Cuomo and Christie set back a golden chance for positive change; their watered-down versions of the original reform bill have gone nowhere in the New York and New Jersey legislatures. The unanimous legislative votes clearly indicate public support for serious change at the Port Authority. The agency has become a formidable political force in its own right, often more powerful than the institutions that gave it life. Only concerted effort to rein in its abuses and formulate a more sensible vision for its future can ensure that the Port Authority lives up to its original missionâ€”to provide smooth, nonpolitical administration of essentially nonpolitical matters.

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Chapter 3 : New Foundations Fall - Foundation - Makeup The Beauty Authority - NewBeauty

The New Yorker, December 7, P. A practical joker deflates Travis Penniman, war correspondent, novelist, political authority and lecturer by having a lot of people turn up who do not know.

But I have never seen what is going on now: As New York enters the third decade of the twenty-first century, it is in imminent danger of becoming something it has never been before: For the first time in its history, New York is, well, boring. San Francisco is overrun by tech conjurers who are rapidly annihilating its remarkable diversity; they swarm in and out of the metropolis in specially chartered buses to work in Silicon Valley, using the city itself as a gigantic bed-and-breakfast. Boston, which used to be a city of a thousand nooks and crannies, back-alley restaurants and shops, dive bars and ice cream parlors hidden under its elevated, is now one long, monotonous wall of modern skyscraper. In Washington, an army of cranes has transformed the city in recent years, smoothing out all that was real and organic into a town of mausoleums for the Trump crowd to revel in. By trying to improve our cities, we have only succeeded in making them empty simulacra of what was. To bring this about we have signed on to political scams and mindless development schemes that are so exclusive they are more destructive than all they were supposed to improve. The urban crisis of affluence exemplifies our wider crisis: Conrad Those of us who have been in New York for any amount of time are immediately suspected of nostalgia if we dare to compare our shiny city of today unfavorably, in any way, with what came before. So let me make one thing perfectly clear, as that old New Yorker Dick Nixon used to say, and list right now all the things I hated about the New York of the Seventies: New York today is in the aggregate is probably a wealthier, healthier, cleaner, safer, less corrupt, and better-run city than it has ever been. The same can be said for most of those other cities seen as recent urban success stories, from Los Angeles to Philadelphia, Atlanta to Portland, Oregon. Homelessness is at or near record levels. Bus-stop ads all over New York urge everyone to carry the emergency medication naloxone so that they can reverse some of the overdoses that kill nearly four New Yorkers every day. The average New Yorker now works harder than ever, for less and less. Poverty in the city has lessened somewhat in the past few years, but in the official poverty rate was still The landlords are killing the town. But the rent is too damn high, and getting higher all the time. And the situation is getting rapidly worse. The burden has fallen hardest on those who can least afford it, according to the real estate database StreetEasy, with rents rising fastest on the lowest wage earners in the city. The result has been predictable enough. Homelessness in the city has reached a level not seen here in decades, if ever. Most of the newly homeless are not derelicts or the mentally ill. One common belief, even in many liberal circles, is that the cause of these outrageous rents and prices is the very government intervention that was intended to ameliorate them: This notion might have some validity if, say, rent regulations in New York stifled construction. New buildings in the city are not subject to rent control and never have been. The city continues to furiously tear itself down and build itself back up again. New buildings are spiked into every available lot, and they rise higher than ever before. New York has had some sort of rent regulation continuously since , and today nearly half of its apartments are, in all, containing around 2. Rents can also be raised when apartments are vacated, or when landlords make improvements to the building or to individual apartments. From to , at least , apartments were deregulated, a number that includes an estimated one quarter of all apartments on the increasingly wealthy Upper West Side of Manhattan, where I live. This is due to rising incomes at some addresses. But driving deregulation as well is the fact that private equity funds see great possibilities in your neighborhood. Your landlord is now much less likely to be a family or an individual who has owned one or two buildings for years, depending on them for a safe and steady income, and much more likely to be a faceless, massively financed international firm that is highly incentivized to force you out on the street and keep its investors happy. It is also the wholesale destruction of the public city. Look at almost any public service or space in New York, and you will see that it has been diminished, degraded, appropriated. Ridership has approached record levels in recent years, and on the first day of ,

Governor Andrew Cuomo led a giddy celebration to mark the opening of three new stations on the fabled Second Avenue subway, which finally became a partial reality after first being proposed in 1928. The self-congratulations were short-lived, as service on the remainder of the system began to decline precipitously. An antiquated and misconfigured train-signaling system—one that, at the rate the Metropolitan Transportation Authority is working on it, will be fully replaced sometime in the late 2020s, by which time nanobots will likely have been doing the job for a generation—began causing longer and longer delays, with both cars and platforms filling up with frustrated, angry passengers. In one of the many byzantine quirks of how we are governed in New York, the trains and buses are part of the MTA, which is controlled by Governor Cuomo. But the more telling lesson here is that a tax on the wealthiest New Yorkers to restore even the most vital public good cannot be so much as entertained. Over the past few decades, what used to be regarded as inviolable public space has been systematically rolled up and surrendered to unelected private authorities. Even the streets are no longer fully under public control. But before that could happen, Sonia Sotomayor, then a federal district court judge in Manhattan, found the business districts guilty of breaking minimum-wage laws, using their newfound source of almost free labor to undercut competition—and handing the money they made as a result to their already well-paid executives. Everywhere now, private institutions have largely taken over the neighborhoods around them, repurposing them solely to meet their own needs. Our tax-free universities have been among the most shameless offenders. Cooper Union—a cultural landmark founded in 1862 as a night school of the arts and sciences for working men and women—abolished its legacy of free tuition after clotting the Astor Place area with disturbing glass boxes and nearly driving itself into bankruptcy. New York University has torn down much of the historic West Village, including most of what was the landmark Provincetown Playhouse and a home that Edgar Allan Poe once lived in. NYU partially re-created the facade of the Poe house. Columbia University used and abused the power of eminent domain to kick out residents and small businesses at the western end of 116th Street, and is now stuffing that street with the huge, glassy, dreadful buildings of its new Manhattanville campus, courtesy of its own international vandal, sorry, architect, Renzo Piano. This has become an accepted way of proceeding in New York, even for subsidized institutions that are supposed to serve a public purpose. It ended up instead as an arena with all the charm of your basic bus terminal, home to an unwanted basketball team owned by a Russian oligarch. But then, as with any major New York development today, some form of deception is requisite. The Atlantic Yards scam was bankrolled with hundreds of millions in public funding—though the chicanery here is so involved that no one can even say for sure what the final public subsidy figures will be. Sports stadiums long ago became a preferred method of legalized graft in America, with even such struggling cities as Cleveland, Detroit, Baltimore, and Oakland, California, willingly shelling out hundreds of millions apiece to retain or attract major-league franchises. But New York has taken the practice to stygian depths. The two major-league stadiums opened in 2009 were far from the first or the only large public subsidies the city has given to the Yankees and the Mets. Nonetheless, the Yankees reduced the number of seats available to the general public by more than 9,000, so that the team could make room for thirty-seven additional luxury suites in its ballpark. But here the new stadium was intended only as the anchor of a grand plan by Michael Bloomberg to transform the entire area around it—one terminus of an axis of redevelopment set to run across the entire width of the city, on a scale that only Robert Moses might have attempted. To facilitate this process, writes the impassioned social advocate Jeremiah Moss in his wrathful howl *Vanishing New York*: More than anyplace else in New York, the borough retains some of the flavor of what the city was like in the Seventies, minus the crime and the decay. Almost one in every two residents is foreign-born, creating wonderful ethnic mixes in nearly all of its low-lying residential and industrial neighborhoods. But this cityscape is changing, too. Much like the Martian spaceships from *The War of the Worlds* in both appearance and annihilating intent, the glass skyscrapers that now dominate Manhattan have in recent years jumped the East River. The first one, a foot Citicorp office building, arrived in Long Island City in 1963. Then, in 1968, came the first residential towers, the forty-two-story Citylights residence, followed nine years later by the five apartment buildings of the East Coast LIC complex.

By , the land rush was on. Its immense glass skyscrapers are overwhelming. From some angles, they look like battling Transformers; from other perspectives, they seem, aptly enough, more like the smokestacks of an impossibly large steamship, about to shove off from the rest of the city altogether. The projected figures are numbing, almost too big to digest. The ninety-two-story tower at 30 Hudson will, the developers say, boast the first open-air observation deck in New York higher than that on the Empire State Building. Most of them are gone or going now, after decades in the same visibly slouching, century-old apartment house where I live. In the apartment below ours, from the day I moved in back in with three friends from college, was Mercedes, an immigrant from the Dominican Republic, with her extended family of three generations. When her mother, Anna, a sunny, religious, and unfailingly kind woman, began to decline with the years, Mercedes tended to her devotedly at home, bringing a hospital bed into their living room. After all those years, they were just gone, almost overnight. Across the hall from me was Raymond, a self-destructive but amiable drunk who fell completely apart when his mother died. He could not keep up the rent, or himself, and was finally evicted and then banned from the block after several loud arguments with the super. He came back anyway and lay down in the middle of the street one afternoon—a small Irish-Latino man, in his perpetual baseball cap and scraggly beard, insisting in his gravelly, whiskey-soaked voice that they should just go ahead and run him over. Artie and James, our constant eyes on the street, who spend much of their time sitting out on the stoop trying to convince me that the Mets are a major-league ball team, waved off the traffic and persuaded him to get up out of the street. Forgiven by the super, Raymond now comes back to sit on the stoop with his old friends, a living ghost haunting the block where he was born. We have been almost a parody of multiculturalism on our little street. Black and white, Hispanic and Asian; straight, gay, and transgender; families of all kinds—extended, adopted, arranged by convenience or design. I would come home and see the daughters of our Sikh mailman, before they grew up, playing baseball in the halls. Beneath me I could hear a hive of dinnertime conversations carried on in half a dozen languages, smell cooking that came from all over the world, hear someone ringing a gong and repeating a Buddhist chant. It is through all these interactions, multiplied a million times, that a truly great city is made. These stores, like so many others in my neighborhood, have not been replaced. In an informal survey of Broadway, from 93rd Street to rd, I recently counted twenty-four vacant storefronts—many of them very large spaces, enough to account for roughly one third of the street frontage. Nearly all of them have been empty now for months or even years. Almost everything of use has gone. There was Oppenheimer Meats, a butcher shop whose founder had reportedly fled Nazi Germany and, I was told, brought his business down to our neighborhood from Washington Heights sometime in the Forties. A large, imposing man with a bristling mustache, he would strut behind his counter like a Prussian field marshal, but he hired people of every color from the neighborhood and left them to run the shop when he retired. Over on Amsterdam, between 97th and 98th Streets, was a whole row of enterprises: Launder Center, thanks to how part of its name had been torn out of its awning. Then they were all gone, too, without warning. Soon after, I ran into Shirley, doughty little Asian abbess of the St. On the corner of 98th and Broadway is the shell of what was once RCI, an independent appliance store founded in as Radio Clinic. It was one of the oldest surviving businesses on the Upper West Side. The little shop lost its lease in , the business chased off after eighty years in the neighborhood.

Chapter 4 : Downfall (film) - Wikipedia

The Decline and Fall of the American Empire *The Decline and Fall of the American Empire* a gloomy *New York Times* headline summed demanding respect for American authority and threatening.

Education The Social Order Not since I lived and worked briefly in South Africa under the apartheid regime have I seen a city as racially segregated as Bradford in the north of England. In South Africa, of course, the racial segregation was a matter of law: But stone walls do not a ghetto make: Once a thriving woolen-manufacturing town, Bradford reached an acme of prosperity in the second half of the nineteenth century, before its success evaporated, leaving behind a legacy of municipal pride and magnificence, of splendid public buildings in the Gothic and renaissance-revival styles. One beautiful part of the city, Hanover Square, is a small masterpiece of Victorian town architecture: Nowadays, there is not a white face to be seen in the square, nor that of any woman. It is strictly men only on the street, dressed as for the North-West Frontier apart, incongruously, from their sneakers ; a group of them perpetually mills around outside the house that functions as a madrassa, or Muslim school. And in July last year, only a few weeks before September 11, serious riots the worst in Britain for 20 years did in fact break out in Bradford and other similar northern English cities, such as Blackburn and Oldham. White gangs clashed with Pakistani ones, indulging for several days in the pleasures of looting and arson, under the comforting illusion that they were fighting for a cause. The young whites believed themselves to have been dispossessed of something by the young Muslims, without the young Muslims believing that they had inherited anything from the young whites. Both groups were united inâ€”though not, of course, byâ€”their resentment. One man was not at all surprised at this outbreak of inchoate racial fury. He was Ray Honeyford, the headmaster of a middle school in an immigrant area of Bradford in the early s. He knew that the official multiculturalist educational policies that he was expected to implement would sooner or later lead to social disaster such as these riots: For at least two years, the Honeyford Affair, as it was known, was a national preoccupation, calling forth endless newspaper and broadcast commentary, the man himself often branded a near-murderous racist and ultimately drummed out of his job. Hell, it seems, hath no fury like a multiculturalist contradicted. Of course, the events of September 11 have concentrated at least some British minds a little harder on questions of cultural diversity and group loyalties. A disturbingly large number of British Muslims, from a variety of backgrounds, supported al-Qaida. Three of the captives now held at Guantanamo were from Britain, all of them products of the kind of homes that now exist in Bradford and elsewhere by the thousands. Several British Islamic charities were found to have been channeling money to terrorists. Richard Reid, who tried to blow up a transatlantic airliner with Semtex in his sneakers, had converted to Islam in a British jail. The newly alert intelligence service in the prison in which I work now believes that fully half of the Muslim prisoners there sympathize with the World Trade Center attacks: The British elites, it appears, would have done far better to have heeded rather than vilified Honeyford almost two decades ago. Honeyford did not believe that the cultural identity necessary to prevent the balkanization of our cities into warring ethnic and religious factions implied a deadening cultural or religious uniformity. On the contrary, he used the example of the Jews who emigrated to Britain, including to Bradford and nearby Manchester, in substantial numbers at the end of the nineteenth century as an example of what he meant. Within a generation of arrival, Jews succeeded, despite the initial prejudice against them, in making a hugely disproportionate contribution to the upper reaches of national life as academics, cabinet ministers, entrepreneurs, doctors and lawyers, writers and artists. The upkeep of their own traditions was entirely their own affair, and they relied not at all on official patronage or the doctrines of multiculturalism. When the storm broke over his head in , Honeyford had been headmaster of Drummond Middle School for four years. His school was another magnificent piece of high-Victorian public architecture, grand without being overbearing, and conveying implicit aesthetic and moral lessons to its pupils, however humble the homes from which they came. The collapse of the cultural confidence that had produced such a school

building was soon complete, however: All children in the area now go to school in the preternaturally hideous buildings of modern British architecture, whose combination of Le Corbusian functionalism, financial stringency, and bad taste are a complete visual education in brutality. Honeyford brought his troubles down upon him when he published an article exposing the follies of multicultural education in the conservative *Salisbury Review*, after the worthy but dull *Times Educational Supplement*, for which he had previously written, turned it down. That the article appeared in *The Salisbury Review* gave almost as much offense as its content: All opinion is free, of course, but some opinions are freer than others. The debasement of language that multiculturalist and anti-racist bureaucrats have brought about, he argued, has made it extremely difficult to talk honestly or clearly about racial and cultural matters. Only by means of such deliberate blindness can the tenets of multiculturalism, feminism, and universal human rights be reconciled. Immigrant parents, he observed, frequently sent their children back to Pakistan and Bangladesh for months or even years at a time, often precisely to keep them from acquiring any British cultural characteristics. Though this practice had obvious social and educational disadvantages for people destined to spend their adult lives in Britain—and though it was entirely illegal, as well—the authorities turned a blind eye to it. British law obliges a parent, once his child is registered at a school, to ensure that he attends regularly; any white parent who kept his child away for so long would undoubtedly be prosecuted and punished. As Honeyford summed up: In the *Times Educational Supplement*, Honeyford had already mentioned the great and growing educational success of some subgroups of Indian immigrants, which he linked to their system of values—with the obvious corollary that the educational failure of other groups was not attributable to British racial prejudice. Their education suffered in a school dominated by pupils from non-English-speaking homes, he said, and he suggested that officials disregarded their plight because their parents, ill-educated and inarticulate, had formed no pressure group, and no political capital could be made of them. He received several death threats, which the police took seriously enough to connect his home by alarm directly to the local police station. For months, he had to enter his own school under police protection from the small but militant group of pickets that formed outside and grew in size and volume whenever a television camera appeared. The Bradford Education Authority considered the possibility of a court order against the demonstrators, since children who continued to attend the school were likewise insulted as stooges and sell-outs, but it decided that such an order would only inflame passions further. Thus political extremists learned a valuable lesson: No insult was deemed too scurrilous to hurl at Honeyford. Honeyford will be the next person to be advocating bird shots [sic] fired at the black children at the school. Fortunately, the eminent lawyer representing him argued so vigorously that those intending to convict him had to acquit him. The affair took its toll on him: His wife dissuaded him, however, telling him that he would never be able to live with himself if he concluded so sordid a deal. Intimidation spread and became a tool against anyone who supported Honeyford. For very similar reasons, the majority of school headmasters in Bradford who agreed with Honeyford in private remained silent in public. The campaign against Honeyford disregarded entirely the fact that no complaint had ever been received about his competence as a teacher, or the fact that there were always far more applications to his school mainly by Muslim parents than there were places. Several attempts by political zealots on the city council to have him dismissed failed for lack of legal cause. Eventually, however, he accepted early retirement: Although teaching was his vocation, Honeyford never returned to it. Instead, he wrote several books about race relations and education, and became a freelance journalist. It is difficult, meeting him now, to believe that he was ever a natural controversialist. He lives in modest retirement. He is mild-mannered and unexcitable. He was once a naive believer in the freedom of expression and the virtues of plain speaking—formerly a tradition in the north of England. He thought that different opinions might be tolerated, not having grasped that the purpose of those who argue for cultural diversity is to impose ideological uniformity. However accurate, such an inflammatory statement enabled his detractors to pretend that he was motivated by prejudice: But it is impossible to meet Honeyford for long without realizing that he is a passionate believer in the redemptive power of education and in the duty of schools to give the children of immigrants the same educational

opportunities as everyone else. His only regret about the affair was that it drastically shortened his teaching career. It is a tribute to the power of Orwellian language that a man who believes these things should successfully have been labeled a racist. His own personal history would suggest some direct insight into the problems of the disadvantaged. His father was an unskilled laborer injured in the First World War and able to work only intermittently thereafter. His mother was the daughter of penniless Irish immigrants. His parents had 11 children, six of whom died in childhood. They lived in a small house in Manchester with no indoor lavatory and not a single book. He was brought up in a place and in times when the next meal was not guaranteed to appear. Yet despite the poverty, theft was unheard of: Through nervousness rather than lack of ability, Honeyford failed the examination, given at the age of 11, for entrance to the local selective, state-run grammar school, a guaranteed and by far the easiest route out of the slums. As was the British working-class custom of the time, he left school at the earliest opportunity to find work, an office job that bored him. Restless, he decided to go to night school to get a high school education, and he then gained acceptance for teacher training. After receiving his teaching diploma, he obtained a B. Such a man is unlikely to wish to deny opportunity to others: This fact alone suggests his large-mindedness: Such schools, which ideologues condemned as elitist, might have helped prevent the strife that convulses Bradford today by creating a common culture and an interracial elite. They would have drawn by and large, though not of course with percent accuracy the most intelligent children from diverse areas, allowing lasting friendships to form across the races among people likely to grow up to be the most prominent citizens of their respective groups. Instead, today the schools draw children of every level of ability, but from a single geographical area only. If that area is white only, then the school will be white only; if Muslim, the school will be Muslim. Different ethnic and cultural groupsâ€”their differences preserved in educational aspiracâ€”live in geographical proximity but without any real contact. It does not require a Nostradamus to predict the consequences. Of course, the forces that deny a British education to the Muslims of Bradford have also denied it to the whites, whoâ€”on the grounds of the new need for a multiculturalist outlookâ€”receive schooling that leaves them virtually as ignorant of British history and traditions as their Muslim counterparts, without giving them any useful knowledge of any other history or traditions. They are thus left to float free in the sea of popular culture, without cultural or moral bearings and prey to the inchoate but deep resentments that this popular culture so successfully inculcates. Islam for the 21st Century Dude. The scene is set for a battle of competing resentments. If we had only listened to Ray Honeyford, we should not have sown what we are now reaping and what we and others shall reap for many years to come.

Chapter 5 : The Fall of Theresa May " and Donald Trump?

The recently formed New York City Housing Authority"the agency charged with the design, construction, and administration of this and future housing developments across the city"stopped accepting applications when their number went north of three thousand.

But was a year of two revolutions in Russia. First came the February Revolution, which precipitated the collapse of the ruling Romanov dynasty and introduced new possibilities for the future of the Russian state. Note that below we use the Gregorian calendar dates, even though Russia used the Julian calendar, which was 13 days behind. The eventful month brought a too-little-too-late realization on behalf of the Czar, Nicholas II, that three years of fighting in World War had depleted Russian infrastructure. Soldiers faced munitions shortages and the cities suffered through food scarcity. A particularly cold and punishing winter exacerbated the situation. The rolling stock has been and remains insufficient and we can hardly repair the worn out engines and cars, because nearly all the manufactories and fabrics of the country work for the army. His hopes were misplaced, however, as his problems were about to get much worse, especially with his female subjects. Between and , , more women began working outside the home for the first time. It has become increasingly clear that the unseen effort of a woman and her labour often support the entire economy of a country. In these bread lines, news and rumors about planned rationing spread. When Saint Petersburg municipal authorities announced on March 4 that rationing would begin ten days later, there was widespread panic; bakeries were sacked, their windows broken and supplies stolen. As he had throughout the previous months, Nicholas once again underestimated the extent of the unrest and again departed for military headquarters more than miles away in Mogliev, which is now in Belarus, against the advice of his ministers. The weather had improved and comparatively warm 23 degrees Fahrenheit temperatures and bright sunshine seemed to encourage crowds to assemble in public spaces. Since , Russian revolutionary factions, including the Bolsheviks, had encouraged women to celebrate the occasion as an opportunity to build solidarity. At the textile factories, women went on strike and marched to the metal works to persuade the men employed there to join them. Bread for the workers! We decided to join the demonstration. The crowds were swelled by the presence of curious onlookers from all social backgrounds. Nicholas and his wife, Empress Alexandra, who remained at the Alexander Palace just outside Saint Petersburg with their five children, continued to underestimate the seriousness of the discontent. But this will all pass and quieten down " if the Duma would only behave itself " one does not print the worst speeches. The presence of large groups of women among the demonstrators made soldiers particularly reluctant to fire on the crowds. When the soldiers joined the demonstrators, as opposed to firing upon them, the end of the Romanov dynasty was near. In exile in Switzerland, Vladimir Lenin followed events in Russia with interest but he distrusted the growing leadership role of Duma, fearing that the result of the unrest would be the replacement of one privileged elite with another, with the workers and peasants again excluded from any real influence. The involvement of the military in demonstrations against his rule finally persuaded Nicholas to take the unrest seriously. In the early hours of March 13 , Nicholas departed military headquarters by train to address the collapse of his authority in Saint Petersburg. He would lose his throne over the course of the journey. Carolyn Harris teaches history at the University of Toronto, School of Continuing Studies and writes about history and royalty at Royalhistorian.

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Chapter 6 : The Death of a Once Great City | Harper's Magazine

The new president of the New York City Transit Authority wants to make the trains (and buses) run on time. It won't be easy, William Finnegan writes.

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German print magazines Magazines can be distributed through the mail , through sales by newsstands , bookstores , or other vendors, or through free distribution at selected pick-up locations. The subscription business models for distribution fall into three main categories. Paid circulation[edit] In this model, the magazine is sold to readers for a price, either on a per-issue basis or by subscription, where an annual fee or monthly price is paid and issues are sent by post to readers. Paid circulation allows for defined readership statistics. Non-paid circulation[edit] This means that there is no cover price and issues are given away, for example in street dispensers, airline, or included with other products or publications. Because this model involves giving issues away to unspecific populations, the statistics only entail the number of issues distributed, and not who reads them. Controlled circulation[edit] This is the model used by many trade magazines industry-based periodicals distributed only to qualifying readers, often for free and determined by some form of survey. Because of costs e. This latter model was widely used before the rise of the World Wide Web and is still employed by some titles. For example, in the United Kingdom, a number of computer-industry magazines use this model, including Computer Weekly and Computing , and in finance, Waters Magazine. For the global media industry, an example would be VideoAge International. Front cover of 1 October issue of The Illustrated London News The earliest example of magazines was Erbauliche Monats Unterredungen , a literary and philosophy magazine, which was launched in in Germany. He disseminated the weekly news of music, dance and Parisian society from until in verse, in what he called a gazette burlesque, assembled in three volumes of La Muse historique , , The French press lagged a generation behind the British, for they catered to the needs the aristocracy, while the newer British counterparts were oriented toward the middle and working classes. They were not totally quiescent politicallyâ€”often they criticized Church abuses and bureaucratic ineptitude. They supported the monarchy and they played at most a small role in stimulating the revolution. Jean-Paul Marat â€” was the most prominent editor. After Napoleon reimposed strict censorship. Most were based in Paris and most emphasized literature, poetry and stories. They served religious, cultural and political communities. In times of political crisis they expressed and helped shape the views of their readership and thereby were major elements in the changing political culture. None were officially owned or sponsored by the Church and they reflected a range of opinion among educated Catholics about current issues, such as the July Revolution that overthrew the Bourbon monarchy. Several were strong supporters of the Bourbon kings, but all eight ultimately urged support for the new government, putting their appeals in terms of preserving civil order. They often discussed the relationship between church and state. Generally, they urged priests to focus on spiritual matters and not engage in politics. Patricia Dougherty says this process created a distance between the Church and the new monarch and enabled Catholics to develop a new understanding of church-state relationships and the source of political authority. It was the first official gazette of the Ottoman Empire , edited by Alexandre Blacque at the expense of the Sublime Porte. Its name

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perhaps referred to the French newspaper Le Moniteur Universel. It was issued weekly. Takvim-i vekayi was published a few months later, intended as a translation of the Moniteur into Ottoman Turkish. After having been edited by former Consul for Denmark "M. Franceschi", and later on by "Hassuna de Ghiez", it was lastly edited by Lucien Rouet. However, facing the hostility of embassies, it was closed in the s. Satire[edit] Satirical magazines of Turkey have a long tradition, with the first magazine Diyojen published in There are currently around 20 satirical magazines ; the leading ones are Penguen 70, weekly circulation , LeMan 50, and Uykusuz. Others include L-Manyak and Lombok.

Chapter 7 : Male Authority and the Decline of America - Taki's Magazine - Taki's Magazine

Another Port Authority commissioner, Chairman David Samson, a former New Jersey attorney general appointed to the Port Authority by Governor Chris Christie, resigned after facing accusations of conflicts of interest and self-dealing pertaining to his legal practice.

March 02, photo credit: Bigstock Our elected representatives, including many judges, more and more refuse to comply with federal immigration law. They do not conceive of themselves as disinterested agents of a system that it is their duty to serve and, by serving, bring into being. Rather, they themselves are the effective arbiters of justice. Hence our many sanctuary cities and California, a sanctuary state. National fertility rates have hit record lows, threatening our long-term prospects of survival and the preservation of American heritage. With more women than ever in the workplace, and an increasing number of people not living by traditional religious mores concerning sex and marriage, it is likely that this trend—or rather, gradual dying-off—will continue apace. Meanwhile, the two business parties are working to transform the U. Amid the loss of industry and the exorbitant rise in cost of living, the working class numbs itself on opiates and the middle class dwindles away. The goal is to replace both groups with an international peasantry, ensuring the highest possible profits for the donors who own our politicians. Like the illegal-immigration issue, the Mueller investigation attests to the absolute cynicism of our politics. Trying to thwart the globalist business enterprise, President Trump is a figure who must be got rid of, and if unscrupulously working up a Russian conspiracy does the trick, well then, so be it. In short, America is now a country in name only, for we lack the collective will to fill the particular governmental roles without which there cannot be a country. We are like a football team whose quarterback is unwilling to throw the ball, or whose wide receivers are unwilling to catch his passes. Even if we did not lack the will to yield to an authority other than oneself, these would still be quite difficult to deal with. But the greatest problem by far is the very disposition of Americans today. They are by no means disposed by respect for the objective legitimacy of the system itself to yield to a law with which they do not agree. For de Tocqueville as for the Founding Fathers, democracy in America worked because it was a Christian nation. He thought especially well of American women, to whose moral excellence he attributed the excellence of the citizenry. Those women, however, were the products of a patriarchal culture, and here I come to my central insight. It is that the loss of male authority in the family creates a social conditioning that is adverse to democracy. Boys and girls grew up learning to behave in certain ways, and the failure to do so, they understood, would entail punishment from a father—an authority figure whom they ideally both loved and feared. Having been conditioned in childhood to obey, adults, once they came to exercise power in the culture, would be far more disposed than they are now to respect and submit to a rule, or convention, or law, or whatever, whether they agreed with it or not. To a significant extent, the loss of male authority also entails the loss of morality in general. It is important to understand that when people do a good thing, or what they are supposed to do, it is not necessarily because mere reason has prompted them to do so. After all, reason by itself is value-neutral. If a man is brave or generous, you can be sure he feels internally motivated to be so, and that will typically be rooted in past experience, ultimately going back to the moral conditioning by which he was shaped as a child. Yet after the sexual revolution and no-fault divorce—blows from which America may never recover—men are no longer the moral authorities they used to be. Nor has a culture of single mothers proved to be an adequate replacement. They occupy the remissive space opened up by the hippies, deepening it from an aesthetic into a politics. The self-absorbed therapy of the hippies clears the way for the mass-murder therapy of the thugs. Where in the past Americans learned self-restraint by having to subordinate themselves from their earliest years to an external force. Removed from the family, authority is now the province of the bureaucratic state, which rules over mass man with an obscene, Kafkaesque impersonality. We have a lot to learn, with respect to correcting this situation, from that wise American Robert Nisbet. There is the authority of parent over the small child, of the priest over the communicant, the teacher over the pupil, the master over

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the apprentice, and so on. Society is a network or tissue of such authorities; authority may be loose, gentle, protective, and designed to produce individuality, but it is authority nevertheless. Only because of the restraining and guiding effects of such authority does it become possible for human beings to sustain so liberal a political government as that which the Founding Fathers designed in this country and which flourished in England from the late seventeenth century on. Remove the social bonds and you emerge with, not a free but a chaotic people, not with creative but impotent individuals.

Chapter 8 : When Will China's Government Collapse? " Foreign Policy

Twenty-nine new buildings were added last year alone, according to New York magazine, with at least twenty-eight more "on tap" for The tallest building of all was announced last November, a \$3 billion project with a luxury condo towering feet high.

In Britain, a referendum on Brexit had shocked and overturned the British and European Establishments, and dispatched Prime Minister David Cameron to the bucolic shires whence he came. And both Trump and May seemed to have captured a restless, rightist mood in the American and British publics, as Reagan and Thatcher had before them. Trump had endorsed Brexit and May, in turn, had been the first foreign visitor to the White House, desperate for a new U. Although many of us believed that Brexit was understandable but irrational and that Trump was a catastrophe just waiting to unfold, the people of the two countries begged to differ. Brexit passed only narrowly, 52%48 percent. Both countries, despite the top-line results, remained deeply divided " riven by the cleavages of globalization and its discontents. This week, Trump slumped to the lowest approval ratings of his term " in the upper-to-mids " while being called a liar by the former head of the FBI. And May was humiliated " there is no other word for it " by the British voters in a snap election. In the wake of Brexit and Trump, the forces of reaction in Europe have also seemed to recede. Maybe Bernie could have done it, after all? And maybe this result, just as Brexit foretold Trump, could presage a Democratic swing in the House next year? After this British turbulence, anything is surely possible. She began with the presumption that she would coast to victory because her opponent was simply unelectable, extremist, and obviously deplorable in every way. She decided to run a campaign about her, rather than about the country. She kept her public appearances to small, controlled settings, while Corbyn drew increasingly large crowds at outdoor rallies. She chose to run solely on Brexit " and the hardest of Brexits on offer " while Labour unveiled a whole set of big-spending, big-borrowing, big-government policies that drew a million new younger voters to the polls. It was Clinton all over again " with the same dismal result. After a while, the Brits felt it was overkill, and the underdog Corbyn, always mild-mannered and never personal in his attacks, gained unlikely sympathy. And then she simply screwed up. She put herself forward as strong and consistent, and yet she had promised for months that she would not hold an early, snap election, only to break her word. She decided to skip the televised debates, and thereby looked defensive and weak. She came across as less authentic than Corbyn, and much less comfortable in herself. From almost the moment the election was announced, Labour soared. The point gap narrowed to a few within a little over a month. And on the critical issue of Brexit, she underestimated the ambivalence in the country as a whole. She mistook 52 percent for a national consensus. The millennials actually turned up this time. In a student town like Cambridge , for example, the Labour majority went from to more than 12, " a staggering leap. The tabloid press this morning is already after her, and the ruthless Tories will follow. And that, indeed, was another surprise: This was a vote for keeping the entire country together and for less of a rush to get out of the EU and even perhaps a second referendum. It was a populist wave " for the recent past. What this election shows in Britain is that after years of austerity and neoliberal economics, there is also an opening for a left-populism, at least in Europe. Whether it can win outright is another question. But what it has been able to do is to tip Britain into an unexpected political impasse, to give it a parliament where the Tories will not be able to sustain a reliably pro-Brexit majority for very long, and to make it all but certain that another election will at some point have to be called, possibly in the fall. This sobering reality was not advanced by the Comey hearings yesterday, riveting though they were. We have long known that Trump colluded with the Russian government to tilt the election against his opponent " because he did so on national television during the campaign, urging the Kremlin to release more hacked Clinton emails to help him win. We also know that he fired FBI Director James Comey in order to remove the cloud of the Russian investigation from his presidency " because Trump said so on national television himself and then boasted about it to two close Putin lackeys in the Oval

Office! But the details to buttress this picture add weight and texture to all of it. What else do we really need to know? Or look at it this way: Any other president of any party who had been found guilty of these things would be impeached under any other circumstances. Lying under oath about sexual misconduct is trivial in comparison. So, for that matter, is covering up a domestic crime. Watergate did not, after all, involve covering up the attempt of the Kremlin to undermine and corrode the very core of our democratic system — free and fair elections. Even conservative commentators have conceded that if this were a Democrat in power, almighty hell would have already been unleashed. It would already be well under way. The Speaker of the House then tried this one on: Someone who assumes the office of the presidency without knowing that we live under the rule of law, and who believes that the president can rig the legal and investigative system to his own benefit, has no business being president at all. This should not be part of some learning curve. Not knowing this basic fact about our constitutional democracy — something taught in every high school — is ipso facto disqualifying. And if he can violate this clear, bright line, he can violate anything. What chills me even more is how Comey of all people was clearly intimidated. Imagine how many other functionaries, less established and far weaker and less pliable than Comey, will acquiesce to abuse of this kind, if it is ignored, enabled, or allowed to continue. And yet Trump remains in office, hoping that our outrage will somehow be dimmed by his shameless relentlessness and constant distractions. In classic Roy Cohn fashion, he is now, through his thuggish lawyer, calling for an investigation into yes Comey for his leak of his unclassified memoranda as a private citizen. He will say or do anything — and yes, lie through his teeth repeatedly — to obscure the reality in front of our eyes. But we need to be clear about something. If we let an abuse of power of this magnitude go unchallenged, we have begun the formal task of dismantling our system of government. This is not a legal matter — dependent on whether you can convict someone of a specific crime. This is a political matter — and of the gravest kind — about whether we wish to sustain our liberal democratic norms. Do we Americans have sufficient integrity to do this, and to reverse the drastic error we all so recently made? Maybe the British have just showed us that, yes, we can.

Chapter 9 : Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

The restaurant scene is a prime example of how all too often adults defer to kids because they have relinquished parental authority and lost confidence in themselves.

Ready to fight back? Sign up for Take Action Now and get three actions in your inbox every week. You can read our Privacy Policy here. Thank you for signing up. For more from The Nation, check out our latest issue. Support Progressive Journalism The Nation is reader supported: Travel With The Nation Be the first to hear about Nation Travels destinations, and explore the world with kindred spirits. Sign up for our Wine Club today. Did you know you can support The Nation by drinking wine? This piece originally appeared at TomDispatch. A soft landing for America 40 years from now? The demise of the United States as the global superpower could come far more quickly than anyone imagines. If Washington is dreaming of or as the end of the American Century, a more realistic assessment of domestic and global trends suggests that in , just 15 years from now, it could all be over except for the shouting. Ad Policy Despite the aura of omnipotence most empires project, a look at their history should remind us that they are fragile organisms. So delicate is their ecology of power that, when things start to go truly bad, empires regularly unravel with unholy speed: However, instead of the bloodshed that marked the end of so many past empires, with cities burning and civilians slaughtered, this twenty-first century imperial collapse could come relatively quietly through the invisible tendrils of economic collapse or cyberwarfare. But have no doubt: As a half-dozen European nations have discovered, imperial decline tends to have a remarkably demoralizing impact on a society, regularly bringing at least a generation of economic privation. As the economy cools, political temperatures rise, often sparking serious domestic unrest. Available economic, educational, and military data indicate that, when it comes to US global power, negative trends will aggregate rapidly by and are likely to reach a critical mass no later than The American Century, proclaimed so triumphantly at the start of World War II, will be tattered and fading by , its eighth decade, and could be history by By , according to current plans, the Pentagon will throw a military Hail Mary pass for a dying empire. Ordinary Americans, watching their jobs head overseas, have a more realistic view than their cosseted leaders. The future scenarios include: While these are hardly the only possibilities when it comes to American decline or even collapse, they offer a window into an onrushing future. There is no reason to believe that this trend will reverse itself. Similarly, American leadership in technological innovation is on the wane. A harbinger of further decline: Add to this clear evidence that the US education system, that source of future scientists and innovators, has been falling behind its competitors. After leading the world for decades in to year-olds with university degrees, the country sank to 12th place in The World Economic Forum ranked the United States at a mediocre 52nd among nations in the quality of its university math and science instruction in Nearly half of all graduate students in the sciences in the US are now foreigners, most of whom will be heading home, not staying here as once would have happened. By , in other words, the United States is likely to face a critical shortage of talented scientists. Rogoff, a former chief economist at the International Monetary Fund. Suddenly, the cost of imports soars. Unable to pay for swelling deficits by selling now-devalued Treasury notes abroad, Washington is finally forced to slash its bloated military budget. Under pressure at home and abroad, Washington slowly pulls US forces back from hundreds of overseas bases to a continental perimeter. By now, however, it is far too late. Meanwhile, amid soaring prices, ever-rising unemployment, and a continuing decline in real wages, domestic divisions widen into violent clashes and divisive debates, often over remarkably irrelevant issues. Riding a political tide of disillusionment and despair, a far-right patriot captures the presidency with thundering rhetoric, demanding respect for American authority and threatening military retaliation or economic reprisal. The world pays next to no attention as the American Century ends in silence. Compounding the problem, the Chinese and Indians have suddenly become far heavier energy consumers. Other developed nations are meeting this threat aggressively by plunging into experimental programs to develop alternative energy sources. The United States

has taken a different path, doing far too little to develop alternative sources while, in the last three decades, doubling its dependence on foreign oil imports. Scenario The United States remains so dependent upon foreign oil that a few adverse developments in the global energy market in spark an oil shock. By comparison, it makes the oil shock when prices quadrupled in just months look like the proverbial molehill. That only hikes the cost of US oil imports further. At the same moment, while signing a new series of long-term delivery contracts with China, the Saudis stabilize their own foreign exchange reserves by switching to the Yuan. All the elements that long assured the United States limitless supplies of low-cost oil from that region—logistics, exchange rates, and naval power—evaporate. The oil shock that follows hits the country like a hurricane, sending prices to startling heights, making travel a staggeringly expensive proposition, putting real wages which had long been declining into freefall, and rendering non-competitive whatever American exports remained. With thermostats dropping, gas prices climbing through the roof, and dollars flowing overseas in return for costly oil, the American economy is paralyzed. With long-fraying alliances at an end and fiscal pressures mounting, US military forces finally begin a staged withdrawal from their overseas bases. Within a few years, the US is functionally bankrupt and the clock is ticking toward midnight on the American Century. Present Situation Counterintuitively, as their power wanes, empires often plunge into ill-advised military misadventures. These operations, irrational even from an imperial point of view, often yield hemorrhaging expenditures or humiliating defeats that only accelerate the loss of power. Embattled empires through the ages suffer an arrogance that drives them to plunge ever deeper into military misadventures until defeat becomes debacle. In 1571, a dying imperial Spain dispatched 20,000 soldiers to be massacred by Berber guerrillas in Morocco. In 1882, a fading British Empire destroyed its prestige by attacking Suez. And in 1979 and 1980, the US occupied Afghanistan and invaded Iraq. With the hubris that marks empires over the millennia, Washington has increased its troops in Afghanistan to 100,000, expanded the war into Pakistan, and extended its commitment to and beyond, courting disasters large and small in this guerilla-infested, nuclear-armed graveyard of empires. With the US military stretched thin from Somalia to the Philippines and tensions rising in Israel, Iran, and Korea, possible combinations for a disastrous military crisis abroad are multifold. Soon, mullahs are preaching jihad from mosques throughout the region, and Afghan Army units, long trained by American forces to turn the tide of the war, begin to desert en masse. Taliban fighters then launch a series of remarkably sophisticated strikes aimed at US garrisons across the country, sending American casualties soaring. In scenes reminiscent of Saigon in 1975, US helicopters rescue American soldiers and civilians from rooftops in Kabul and Kandahar. With gas prices soaring and refineries running dry, Washington makes its move, sending in Special Operations forces to seize oil ports in the Persian Gulf. This, in turn, sparks a rash of suicide attacks and the sabotage of pipelines and oil wells. With its growing resources, Beijing is claiming a vast maritime arc from Korea to Indonesia long dominated by the US Navy. To check China and extend its military position globally, Washington is intent on building a new digital network of air and space robotics, advanced cyberwarfare capabilities, and electronic surveillance. Military planners expect this integrated system to envelop the Earth in a cyber-grid capable of blinding entire armies on the battlefield or taking out a single terrorist in field or favela. By 2015, if all goes according to plan, the Pentagon will launch a three-tiered shield of space drones—reaching from stratosphere to exosphere, armed with agile missiles, linked by a resilient modular satellite system, and operated through total telescopic surveillance. Last April, the Pentagon made history. It extended drone operations into the exosphere by quietly launching the X-47B unmanned space shuttle into a low orbit 250 miles above the planet. The X-47B is the first in a new generation of unmanned vehicles that will mark the full weaponization of space, creating an arena for future warfare unlike anything that has gone before. Scenario The technology of space and cyberwarfare is so new and untested that even the most outlandish scenarios may soon be superseded by a reality still hard to conceive. While cyber-shoppers pound the portals of Best Buy for deep discounts on the latest home electronics from China, US Air Force technicians at the Space Surveillance Telescope SST on Maui choke on their coffee as their panoramic screens suddenly blip to black. The first overt strike is one nobody predicted. It suddenly fires all the rocket pods beneath its enormous

foot wingspan, sending dozens of lethal missiles plunging harmlessly into the Yellow Sea, effectively disarming this formidable weapon. Determined to fight fire with fire, the White House authorizes a retaliatory strike. In near panic, the Air Force launches its Falcon Hypersonic Cruise Vehicle into an arc miles above the Pacific Ocean and then, just 20 minutes later, sends the computer codes to fire missiles at seven Chinese satellites in nearby orbits. The launch codes are suddenly inoperative. Carrier fleets begin steaming in circles in the mid-Pacific. Fighter squadrons are grounded. Reaper drones fly aimlessly toward the horizon, crashing when their fuel is exhausted. Within hours, the military power that had dominated the globe for nearly a century has been defeated in World War III without a single human casualty. A New World Order? Even if future events prove duller than these four scenarios suggest, every significant trend points toward a far more striking decline in American global power by than anything Washington now seems to be envisioning. As allies worldwide begin to realign their policies to take cognizance of rising Asian powers, the cost of maintaining or more overseas military bases will simply become unsustainable, finally forcing a staged withdrawal on a still-unwilling Washington. With both the US and China in a race to weaponize space and cyberspace, tensions between the two powers are bound to rise, making military conflict by at least feasible, if hardly guaranteed. Complicating matters even more, the economic, military, and technological trends outlined above will not operate in tidy isolation. As happened to European empires after World War II, such negative forces will undoubtedly prove synergistic. They will combine in thoroughly unexpected ways, create crises for which Americans are remarkably unprepared, and threaten to spin the economy into a sudden downward spiral, consigning this country to a generation or more of economic misery. As US power recedes, the past offers a spectrum of possibilities for a future world order. At one end of this spectrum, the rise of a new global superpower, however unlikely, cannot be ruled out. Yet both China and Russia evince self-referential cultures, recondite non-roman scripts, regional defense strategies, and underdeveloped legal systems, denying them key instruments for global dominion. At the moment then, no single superpower seems to be on the horizon likely to succeed the US. In a dark, dystopian version of our global future, a coalition of transnational corporations, multilateral forces like NATO, and an international financial elite could conceivably forge a single, possibly unstable, supra-national nexus that would make it no longer meaningful to speak of national empires at all. While denationalized corporations and multinational elites would assumedly rule such a world from secure urban enclaves, the multitudes would be relegated to urban and rural wastelands. In *Planet of Slums*, Mike Davis offers at least a partial vision of such a world from the bottom up. In this neo-Westphalian world order, with its endless vistas of micro-violence and unchecked exploitation, each hegemon would dominate its immediate region—Brasilia in South America, Washington in North America, Pretoria in southern Africa, and so on.