



The Ending of Empire is in Process and will Continue to be Violent

by

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on

[The 4th Media](#)



A Dying Empire

"Scare the hell out of the American people." - *Senator Arthur Vandenburg, 1947*

"It is part of the general pattern of misguided policy that our country is now geared to an arms economy which was bred in an artificially induced psychosis of war hysteria and nurtured upon an incessant propaganda of fear. While such an economy may produce a sense of seeming prosperity for the moment, it rests on an illusory foundation of complete unreliability and renders among our political leaders almost a greater fear of peace than is their fear of war." - *General Douglas MacArthur, May 15, 1952*

At one point in my youth it became clear that the U.S. was a violent force in the world, probably as I watched the Vietnam war news on the local TV news. Later, it also became clear that its whole history is one of violence, at home and abroad.

More recently I had naively hoped that as the U.S. Empire goes through its death throes, that it would quit the world peacefully. The latter thought was more a suspension of belief of my knowledge that I knew violence was the U.S. way of life, that I feared what the end of empire might bring.

My current thinking is that through this course of historical violence to all people who oppose the corporate state – from the labourers and workers at home, to the farmers, workers, and labourers in foreign countries – the ending of the empire is in process and is and will continue to be violent.

But it is ending. After a brief hiatus from computer news reading, I came back on line to two articles that examine the economic problems faced by the world.

The first by Paul Craig Roberts, Collapse at Hand, (Counterpunch, June 05, 2012) discussed the U.S. economy and its relationship with the world, China in particular. The conclusion was that the U.S. economy was destined to fail, with the only indeterminate part being the "sooner or later."

The second article was by Mike Whitney, whom I have followed for the past several years and found his examinations and qualified predictions to be very much on the mark.

His article, In Negative Territory – A Synchronized Global Slowdown, (Counterpunch, June 04, 2012) took a stronger look at the situation with the European Union and its problems. His general conclusion was the same, "sooner or later" it has to fall apart in some way.

At least the empire is ending. The violence, so much a part of U.S history, will continue and may become worse, more subtle abroad with the use of drones, and more obvious at home with the application of the dictates of the militarized state within the police forces.

Violence over the Americas

The U.S. was birthed in violence with its revolution of New World elites wanting to shed their relationship with the British Empire and continue on with their own.

The empirical violence followed across the continent, using genocide against the indigenous populations, and military violence against the British and French, who were not paragons of virtue themselves. Mexico was defeated after a false flag set-up, and the way west was clear.

Following this came the Monroe Doctrine, an extension of their Manifest Destiny, and a pretext against Old World imperialism in order that their own imperialism could be applied to Central and South America, and the Caribbean.

With all the agricultural and mineral riches of the New World now at their disposal, the violence continued as U.S. corporations controlled many of the land resources with the direct assistance of the U.S. military.

From Haiti to Chile, subversion, covert actions, training of death squads and police squads, naval and marine interventions became the norm.

It continues today most actively in Central America – most recently with the removal of Zelaya in Honduras in 2009 – and in Columbia with the pretext of the war on drugs used to establish military bases to cover the continent.

The corporations look overseas

The violence spread overseas with the fall of the Spanish possessions in South East Asia. The Philippines had as many as one million casualties as the U.S. defeated the native insurrections against the Spanish rulers.

Later in Indonesia, half a million people were killed in U.S. supported genocide of an insurrection against government corruption there. The oil, tin, and rubber of the region fell under U.S. corporate dominance.

French Indo-China became the next focus, where the created fear of falling dominos under communist rule provided the rationale for the genocide and murder of several millions of indigenous peoples of the region.

Had Canada and the U.S. allowed the UN sanctioned vote to proceed, there would have been no war and a united country not torn up and poisoned by war.

Falling dominoes

The propaganda against the Soviet Union after the Second World War was persistent and ubiquitous. The lies and deceptions that were extended throughout this period still form a part of the U.S. myth of defending freedom.

In reality, the Soviet Union never acted overtly to extend its empire beyond Eastern Europe, which it desired as a buffer against repeated German and French wars against their territory.

Elsewhere in the world, whenever a democratically elected government acted for the people rather than for the corporate interests of the U.S., the propaganda mill turned events into a communist threat against the very heart of U.S. ideology and mythology.

There was no war with the Soviets, but there was an ongoing war with Third World countries that attempted an independent economic and political path supporting their own people and not the corporate interests of the elites.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the U.S. achieved a unipolar world, with their military unmatched by any other in the world. It created a great chance for global peace, but the U.S. policy makers wanted "full spectrum dominance" over the globe for ever and a day.

Rather than declining, the military violence increased, only this time directed at the Middle East.

Europe

Europe had not escaped U.S. military dominance. Immediately after the end of WW II, the U.S. helped Great Britain restore the old order in Greece by turning on the resistance that had almost driven the Germans from the country and had established a collective governance system.

The same occurred in Italy where their resistance, especially in the north, had set up a similar system. In order for Italy not to fall to the communist and socialist parties that were very popular after the war, the U.S. mounted a huge campaign of financial support for the old crony lineage of governance.

The Marshall Plan and NATO were larger ideas to cement a renewed industrial Europe to the U.S. empire. While superficially benevolent, the Marshall Plan was designed to get rid of the socialist "threat" and with the wise use of loans and economic support, tie the region into U.S. economic alignment.

NATO, theoretically designed to stop a Soviet invasion of Europe, has been a successful attempt to extend the U.S. military over Europe and to use that dominance to pursue U.S. purposes outside of Europe (Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Libya...) while extending it ever closer to Russia's borders.

Germany has been nominally occupied by the U.S. since the end of the war, and has attained status as the EU's economic powerhouse, creating its own mini-economic empire that is now unraveling.

Middle East adventures

The British rapidly lost influence in the Middle East after WW II. Over-extended and embattled in India and Palestine, the British passed the baton to the rising U.S. empire.

With the huge resource of oil readily available – the resource that has powered the world in its military and consumptive excesses for the past century – the Middle East was a prime target for U.S. interventions.

It began with the overthrow of Mossadegh in Iran and the installation of the corrupt Shah Pahlavi regime.

Interventions continued and increased with support for Israel and various neighbouring monarchic and totalitarian regimes whose elites supported the U.S. requirements for easy cheap oil.

The Iran-Iraq war created a situation in which both countries could be weakened while the empire provided information and military assistance to Iraq.

Later of course, as Hussein acted more independently, more vociferously against Israel, and swept aside the petrodollar to trade oil in Euros, he became a target of U.S. economic and military interests.

Propaganda - or advertising - or patriotism - it is all the same

No matter what the rhetoric, the ultimate aim of empire is the centralization of wealth and power in the hands of the elite.

The management of empires is largely achieved by the application of basic psychology – creating fear of some "other", in order to have a target for the average citizen to focus on rather than swindles, cheats, thievery, and lies of their own government.

To accompany the fearful "other", a "hero" is created, a patriotic mythological character embodying the best of uber-patriotism, someone who rallies others to the flag regardless of the occasion or occurrence.

This is all so obvious yet unseen as we literally swim in it with our everyday lives. From the moment of birth when the first advertisers throw their bounty on the newborn, the propaganda for our lifestyle is continuous and ubiquitous.

It is often so obvious that it is simply considered normal, but propaganda it is, all in support of the elites who receive the benefits of complacent masses whose uncertainties and discomforts can be attributed to this "other".

It is achieved through mass advertising. It is achieved through the self obeisance of the major media networks who self-censor – or in reality never have to self-censor because to get along in the business means one already accepts the self regulating criteria of the major media supporting the imperial view of the world.

It is achieved through cheap entertainment, every day, every minute entertainment, much of it simply silly and ignorant, other parts sensationalistic but neither significant nor earth moving, and the important news is filtered into sound bites taken out of context, with references to "sources" unknown who plant the seeds of disinformation into the news world.

The U.S. empire has been extremely successful with all this. It started with Edward Bernays, a nephew of Freud, before WW II when he thought, along with many others, that the masses were



too stupid to govern.

The real government was to be the elites, and it was through the manipulation of the psyche of the masses that would allow the elites to govern and create a world over which they had control and power.

For the U.S. fear of the "other" started with its origins, a country founded on the support of racial fear and prejudice. The black slaves and the indigenous populations felt the brunt of this designation as the fearful "other". Through various other permutations it became fear of Bolshevism at home – fear of the unions – and their increasing power in the workplace before and after WW I.

After WW II it became fear of communism, with all its propaganda about the Soviet Union seeking world dominance when in reality it was the U.S. seeking world dominance. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the fear factor momentarily found refuge in fear of drugs and fear of crime, waiting only for "another Pearl Harbour".

Empirical crusades

Lo and behold, another Pearl Harbour occurred, when someone, somehow managed to destroy the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center along with Tower Seven and with another device hitting the Pentagon.

Theoretically, it was the work of Osama bin Laden and twenty or so Saudi citizens, and was greeted with announcements of a "crusade" by George Bush and questions and answers by ignorant pundits and experts answering the question, "Why do they hate us?"

A new and everlasting "other" had been found, the Islamist terrorist, and because it was difficult to differentiate between a simple follower of Islam and those that are terrorists, they all became suspect terrorists.

The imperial rhetoric was ratcheted up, now about freedom and democracy and rule of law, while the very same things were being slowly eroded at home. New imperial wars were started, more millions of peoples have been displaced and killed by U.S. imperial troops and their mercenaries from NATO and private corporations.

Internally, the economy has been hollowed out by this war effort, by the slow destruction of unions, by the out-sourcing of manufacturing and employment through "free trade," by the artificially induced bubbles of technology and housing used to maintain an economy run ever more deeply on consumption financed by debt.

Empirical challenges

This violent empire has demonstrated that it is going to pass violently. It faces serious challenges on several fronts, all intertwined and related.

The first is economic. It is encumbered by its huge debt, a significant portion of which is held by its new arch rival, China, who could unload it at any moment and destroy the value of the dollar and its reserve currency status.

Along with its debt, it is also pulled down by the large unemployment rates, much larger than the official version and not likely to substantially change with so many jobs transferred overseas. Interest rates are near zero, they cannot go significantly further down, and any raise in rates will only make the debt woes of the consumer and mortgage holders worse.

The economy is in a trap, and the citizens are in a trap of paying off the huge bail-outs received by the "too big to fail" banks and financial corporations. The largest sector of the economy is now the military, with over half of discretionary spending going to the military, with the largest military budget in the world, and the main manufacturing sector highly reliant on government funding for

military hardware or research.

Another aspect is resources. Much of the wealth of the U.S. came originally from its own natural resources, especially oil. As we ride along the bumpy road of peak oil, with new sources becoming much more difficult and expensive to extract, the cost of everything – food, clothing, transportation, pharmaceuticals, fertilizers, pesticides – will rise with the cost of oil – unless the economy dips rapidly enough that its price goes down.

The U.S. is not completely reliant on outside oil, but it has to import its fair share. Its allies in Europe are completely dependent on Russian and Middle East oil, while China, India, and Brazil of the emerging economies are trying to gain and retain their own markets away from U.S. influence. Canada is attempting to be best friends by offering the toxic tar sands before the Chinese gobble it up, but the overall amount is small and will not significantly affect long term supplies and usage. Other resources – labour, agricultural, mineral – are all in critical demand as the empire extracts wealth from the Third World.

The military is another serious challenge. Even though it is the most powerful and most technologically advanced in the world, it only seems capable of creating more enemies, more people who really do hate the U.S. for what it stands for in action rather than rhetoric.

The acceptance of torture, of extra judicial murder, the denial of international standards of law created at Nuremberg, at the UN and at the International Criminal court, the use of drones under the control of the president to assassinate theoretical enemies, takes the empire into a moral territory where only the devil treads lightly.

Apart from the judicial aspects, with over eight hundred bases in over one hundred and fifty countries, there is an obvious disconnect between the rhetoric of freedom, liberty, and rule of law when so many other countries are militarily subjugated one way or another to U.S. corporate demands.

The environment is an often unstated challenge to empire, ignored or pushed aside, not considered as an equal component of geopolitical concern.

Yet it is the very nature of our consumptive society, our consumption of large amounts of carbon based fossil fuels – coal, oil, natural gas, shale oil, tar sand – that has pushed the CO2 to a recent high of 400 ppm, well over the estimated 350 ppm considered maximum to prevent runaway global climate change.

The Arctic sea ice average for June 2012 is already below the record low of 2007, and while this leaves the empire hopeful for more oil and gas exploration, it also will produce large unexpected climatic outcomes.

On the other hand, the nuclear industry is exposing its true nature with the wreck of the Fukushima reactors. Deadly radiation continues to poison the land and water, and the Daichi reactor (No. 4) is on the edge of global catastrophe. With thousands of tons of used nuclear fuel spread world wide, and no effective means of storing and controlling it long term, sooner or later another mishap will occur.

Geopolitical challenges are a summative affect of the above challenges. As the empire creates its own economic chaos, fights for control of resources, destroys the environment and continues to rely on the military as the necessary solution to its problems, the global chaos spreads accordingly.

Its focus is now against recalcitrant resource countries abroad, against those trying to free themselves from dollar dominance, and at home, the police are increasingly militarized against protestors, ecologists, environmentalists, and anyone challenging the status quo of the elites.

Palestine



I first started reading the enormous amount of literature available on the U.S. empire and the Middle East when my curiosity required more information other than what seemed the obviously false, devious, or created information concerning the 9/11 attacks. I had always considered the U.S. to be an aggressor state, and understood more than most in my sphere its adventurism abroad and its poor social record internally.

Still, I needed deeper analysis and began reading whatever I could on U.S. foreign policy, history and global history and current events. Superficially I knew a fair bit, but had yet to grasp the significant imperial nature of it all.

At that time, 2002-03, all the reading pointed to oil as the resource, Israel as the outpost, and Palestine as the festering wound that poisoned relationships in Israel, the whole of the Middle East, and much of the rest of the world depending on their alliances and strategic needs vis a vis Israel, the Middle East, and U.S. foreign policy – its imperial policy.

At that time the "peace process" for Israel/Palestine had died although its death went unannounced for a while. Iraq was under attack, again, on trumped up charges of WMD.

Afghanistan had already been demolished and then left with a small occupation force while the real target, the oil resources of Iraq and its aggressive position towards Israeli domination of Palestine, came under occupation. Russia had recovered somewhat from the disaster of allowing the west to enter the country and take off with much of its wealth, leaving behind an oligarchy that controlled the remains.

The Eurozone was comfortably coasting along as another center of economic power supporting the U.S. The dot com bubble had burst, leaving behind many unemployed rich techno freaks, and the housing bubble was taking off nicely thanks to low interest rates and unscrupulous lending practices.

The U.S. economy, now dependent on Chinese imports and Chinese purchases of U.S. debt, hummed along quite nicely for most. The U.S. economy had become based on financialization and China's economy was a rising star of the global manufacturing economy.

The unease in the Middle East tended to be caused by two related factors. The first was the festering wound of Palestinian resistance, the Second Intifada having recently died out. The people the Middle East knew too well the story of Israeli occupation and subjugation of the Palestinian people.

Citizens of the U.S. remained ignorant thanks to a sycophantic media, the AIPAC lobby, and a generalized amnesia of history. Accompanying this was the perceived and real hypocrisy and contradictions of U.S. foreign policy, supporting dictatorships, monarchies, and nominal puppet democracies (Egypt) while calling out for democracy and freedom.

The first decade of the long war

During the first decade of the Twenty-first Century, the U.S. empire showed its true colours, its true intentions. Its stated purpose was to apply regime change through the arc of the Middle East and bring it under U.S. subservience.

It became a decade of war abroad, of increasing state powers internally with the militarization of the police. It became a decade in which Israel could do no wrong, the Palestinians and most other Arab and Muslim people became the "other", the new fear factor, to be hated and despised as irrational violent actors.

In Palestine the situation became more aggressive and bloodier. Land occupation and confiscation by settlements increased. Expropriation of Palestinian land by the military, increased severity of the occupation, and the building of the Security wall all continued with strong U.S. support.

In 2006, the democratic election of Hamas within the Palestinian Authority was annulled as the



election of "terrorists" would not be tolerated (even though it worked in Ireland (Sinn Fein), South Africa (ANC), and Lebanon (Hezbollah) with mainly peaceful results).

In 2006 Gaza was attacked in Operation Cast Lead, an act of aggressive war against an impoverished and mostly unarmed civilian population. In 2006, Israel attacked Lebanon under the guise of defending itself against a border incursion, and while not truly defeated, had their nose well bloodied by the stiff resistance of Hezbollah.

In both cases, the U.S. and its sycophantic supporters, in particular Canada, now under the Conservative government of Stephen Harper, stood aside and judged the Israel "defence" as an "appropriate and proportional response" to what was in reality an offensive illegal act of war.

The war in Iraq turned horribly sour, at least for the U.S. and its allies, for the Iraqis it was the second decade of attacks by the U.S. and its allies after the Gulf War. Afghanistan went through its third decade of occupation and invasion by foreign forces, a war pushed aside by Iraq until it too became a more troubling hotspot with the resurgence of the Pashtun and Taliban and the convoluted relationships with Pakistan.

Iran, always a sore point for the U.S. after they were kicked out in 1979, remained under the spotlight in a war of words and a war of sanctions. It was the latest fear factor, of an Iranian nuclear weapon, even though Israel carried an estimated plus/minus 200 nuclear weapons with delivery capability and encountered no reproach of any kind.

In 2008, the global economy took a dive. The U.S. economy, bogged down by the expenses and waste of war, by the bursting of the housing bubble, by the over-extensions of the unregulated financial markets, and by continued high unemployment and high debt, began its current series of bail outs for the elites and austerity for the masses.

In 2008, George Bush exited and Barack Obama, riding on a wave of hope and change, became president. Nothing changed except for the worse. In spite of his grand sounding rhetoric and lofty ideals, Obama carried on the illegal wars, the torture, Guantanamo continued to operate, judicial processes were put aside under various new laws, the full on support of Israeli aggressions in Palestine and its support of Israeli intentions elsewhere continued.

While the U.S. faced these challenges the BRIC nations improved their position and worked more closely together in order to guard against the U.S. military hegemon. Russia reasserted itself economically and as a resource nation by supplying and making arrangements to provide oil and gas to the European and Chinese markets.

India's economy boomed statistically with a large middle class. It still had serious problems with its general high level of poverty and problems associated with agriculture and land use and land resource consumption. Brazil asserted itself as a world player, the largest economy in Latin America with ties and associations reaching beyond the U.S. Monroe Doctrine barriers of previous eras.

All countries were tied more and more into the Chinese behemoth. Its economy has boomed for several decades as its manufacturing industry, cheap labour, and more laissez faire economic policies created the right environment for its huge gains.

While this was in process the Chinese were also arranging resource purchases with many other countries, many in Africa, and South America, geopolitical arenas less well tended by the U.S. focus on the Middle East.

At the end of the decade, the global situation was and remains precarious. Problems with the economy, the environment, and the military have all increased substantially.

Arab Spring

There are far too many problems occurring in different regions of the world to even list them all.



The festering wound of Palestine remains, obscured by the many other problems in the region, by the creation of a threat from the "other" that occupies media attention well away from Palestine.

The Israel - U.S. alliance is as strong as ever, and well within Israel's ongoing intentions of gaining more and more land within Palestine, to create facts on the ground and prevent any resemblance of a contiguous Palestinian state from ever developing.

Along with land, water is a major concern, and Israel has done its best to harvest most of these resources through confiscation of land where water resources are best, and direct the flow of available water to Israel and the settlements in Palestine.

The Arab Spring, and U.S. double standards according to requirements and influences, has not been a threat to Israel. Tunisia created the first element of the Arab Spring, a small player in the Arab coterie of nations, with successful elections creating a moderate Islamist government.

Egypt followed, but with a large military supplied by the U.S. as part of the peace accord with Israel, the U.S. could sit back and watch how the army reacted. To this day, the army remains powerful, obviously well aligned with its U.S. monetary sources.

With all its economic problems and a western oriented military, it probably cannot do much to change relationships with Israel (one can ask, for instance, why is the border to Gaza not wide open?).

When the Arab Spring hit Bahrain, the U.S. sat back as the government attacked its own citizens, receiving indirect U.S. support when Saudi Arab forces entered the country to quell the protests. Yemen has seen a significant increase in U.S. intervention on the government side, with drone attacks and cruise missile attacks targeting government opponents and killing many civilians.

When Libya followed suit, the U.S. and its NATO partners created the conditions that allowed for full scale aerial bombing support for the rebel forces. Kaddafi's main crime, after being both a darling and a beast at different times in U.S. propaganda, was his attempt to create an African currency union that would not need to rely on the U.S. dollar. As well, very commonly, the U.S. wanted to control Libyan oil resources.

Syria has been the next Arab country to revolt, and the regular news channels present a very confusing picture. A civil war in Syria works to the benefit of both Israel and the U.S. For Israel, it eliminates the power of a potential enemy by destroying its infrastructure and its economy.

For the U.S., it helps their ally Israel at the same time eliminating another countries influence within the Middle Eastern arc of interest. At the same time it creates a problem for Russia with its only naval base on the Syrian coast.

Russia, however, is not as accepting as it was when it came to the efforts in Libya, recognizing that giving the U.S. and NATO a green light for any kind of intervention will be the proverbial giving an inch, taking a mile - or allowing the nose of the camel into the tent.

China has its own geopolitical strategies, many of which coincide with Russian concerns about the U.S. and its allies.

At the moment Syria remains the focus of imperial efforts. A concerted effort appears to be underway by U.S. allies to arm the rebels and create even more chaos, hoping for more and more atrocities that can be blamed on the Assad regime, regardless of who perpetrated them, or who set them up as false flag operations.

This will allow the ultimate goal of using more military force to end the regime, leave the country in ruins, eliminate -maybe - the Russian base, leave Israel to focus other matters, and in extension, to tighten the noose on Iran.



Iran

Once again, U.S. double standards abound. Iran has been a dedicated "other" since the revolution of 1979 removed the Shah from power. Israel's nuclear arsenal was achieved outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Pakistan and India both developed nuclear arsenals outside the NPT.

North Korea has an estimated capacity for 10 weapons, after dropping out of the NPT. Many other countries have the ability to go nuclear if they wish to on relatively short notice. Japan in particular has tons of plutonium in storage. Any nation that has a nuclear energy program could transform it into a weapons producing industry, which is one of the prime purposes for the set up of the U.S. nuclear industry.

However, with the AIPAC lobby, the need for an enemy "other", Iran has become a tremendously distorted nuclear threat. It is a combination of racial fear, religious prejudice and fear, and fear of nuclear disaster that is used to propagandize against Iran.

The leaders of Iran are rational actors and even with a nuclear weapon capability, or further a deliverable nuclear weapon, they are in no position to use it other than as a deterrent. To do so would be suicide and one has to give them the benefit of the doubt that they know and understand that.

Its main usefulness is that it is one way in which Israel creates distractions and distortions in order that it can proceed with its coveted process of possessing all the land within Eretz Israel. For Israel, forever the victim, never the perpetrator, the Palestinian situation is pretty much completely obscured by Iran and all the other events surrounding the region.

The western media gives little or no coverage to the ongoing process of land confiscation, and the abuses, denials, and contortions of international laws and conventions concerning occupation and basic human rights.

It provides the U.S. with the needed enemy adversary, the evil "other", someone requiring extensive militarization in order to control them. As with other geopolitical situations it has been in, the manner in which they wish to resolve it, in spite of rhetoric about "all other options", this one is definitely not off the table, and is quite likely biding its time near the head of the table.

Iran represents an evil other, but only to the U.S. and its NATO allies. China has maintained strong ties with Iran for the obvious energy necessities of their huge population as well as for the strategic benefits of helping maintain control of regional events, keeping the U.S. away from its boundaries and areas of direct influence.

India, ostensibly a U.S. ally, plays its own geopolitical game, desiring energy from Iran, but also considering its regional interests and influences vis a vis Afghanistan, Pakistan, and China.

Outcomes

There are far too many parameters and convolutions and possibilities concerning the outcome of the focus on Iran – too many unexpected unknowns that no one can truly deal with. The one constant is the violent nature of the U.S. empire, and its extensive use of creating the "other" in its empirical adventures. Its allies in NATO and in Israel follow the same pattern.

There are far too many other associated regions and disassociated regions that all tie together into the web of imperial hegemony that the U.S. has created for its needs. These needs are mainly economic, requiring the easy energy of oil, the easy access to cheap labour, the access to the mineral resources and labour resources of the Third World.

At home, the U.S. elites have created a system where a select few hold the power and the wealth to the detriment of many others. The economy for the rich is based mainly on pure financial speculation, with the big banks and financial institutions receiving huge bailouts that may have



prevented a greater economic collapse, but still leave it teetering on the brink of an abyss.

I cannot say how the empire will pass, but it appears to be in process already. Still, it may last another many decades, backed by overt military force. The problems that beset it are numerous: economic, military, environmental, and resources. Its decline may or may not be gradual, and similarly it may or may not be fast.

It may have a punctuated decline where different actions and events create sudden turmoil that is stabilized at a lower level. Distinct events may set off serious declines: war on Iran, nuclear reactor disasters (there are over 400 in the world, over 100 in the U.S. – Chernobyl, Three Mile Island and Fukushima indicate that something catastrophic can and will happen), nuclear wars, financial collapse of the EU and the euro, collapse of the dollar as the reserve oil currency, perhaps at China's instigation if pushed too hard by the U.S. in other areas.

This is an entirely skeptical and pessimistic outlook for the future – at least for those of us living in the first world on the riches and abuses of the Third World. For the billions of people subject to the imperial hegemony of the U.S in one form or another, it may be a blessing.

On the positive side, for future generations, their lives will be the new normal, a world to be accommodated to in order to live and survive as humanity has always done. Perhaps for many of the currently dispossessed it will be better and brighter as new paradigms come into play and old powers lose influence around the world.

Hopefully the future will be in societies with time and energy to put into the care and compassion that humanity so desperately needs, that the world as a whole so desperately needs, with concerns for each other and for the environment in which we live overcoming the power and greed of elitist politics.