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The truth as I see it™

Idaho Common Sense™



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Is the United States an empire in demise?

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George Bernard Shaw said, "We learn from history that we learn nothing from history." What did our Founding Fathers want for this United States of America? Did they want complacency? Did they hope for mediocrity? Did they dream of dependency? Or, did they demand freedom and opportunity; freedom and opportunity at any price. What have we fought and died for this past 223 years?

Are we still that proud, patriotic people? What about 911? Was our response the same as following Pearl Harbor, when we were willing to take on the world? Compare that to 911, an even more heinous attack that intentionally targeted civilians. Well, we were appalled for a few weeks, maybe even a few months.

1941 to 2001. Sixty years. What changed? Only two and a half generations and a near opposite response from the descendants of those who stood in line to join the military, those willing to face death for their country.

In 1978, Sir John Glubb wrote the *Fate of Empires*, studying past empires to understand why they disappear. Did he discover similarities and commonalities? Did he find warnings that offered lessons?

He discovered that the average "empire" survives about 250 years before imploding, crumbling from within. Sir John also was able to outline the ages in the life of empires, allowing insight into their demise?

It is not hard work. It is not independence. It is not patriotism. In the end, what destroys an empire? Laziness, apathy, declining values,

degrading morals, greed, complacency, the inability to fight for what is right. Sound too familiar? Sound too much like the United States today?

Let's look at the ages in the life of an empire? Its birth, the "Age of the Pioneers," is like our ancestors fighting the Revolutionary War for freedom and opportunity. Once established, an empire enters the "Age of Conquests," militarily conquering vast areas of land.

In turn, these conquered lands need to interconnect and trade with one another, leading to the "Age of Commerce." And, this ever-growing economy creates wealth with its attendant expansion of the arts and architecture. Increasing commerce ushers in the "Age of Affluence," followed closely by the "Age of Intellect," with advances in the sciences and "cynical intellectuals" replacing "the sacrifice of the hero." An arrogance develops that leads to "the idea that the human brain can solve the problems of the world."

This character destroying opulence brings with it the loss of "courage, energy, and patriotism;" greed supplanting duty and public service, pacifism and dependence replacing aggressiveness and self-sufficiency.

"Internal political hatreds" grow such that political factions cannot "drop their rivalry and stand shoulder-to-shoulder to save their country." The empire is in trouble, its foundation starting to crumble.

Its heroes are no longer statesmen and soldiers. Instead, they are athletes, singers, and actors.

'Celebrity' means a comedian or football player, both more valued than the military hero.

The empire adopts a welfare state, replacing self-sufficiency with a near mandatory dependence on government. The people now focus on self, caring little for patriotism, service, and country, leading to the final stage of the empire, the "Age of Decadence," defined by Glubb as a "moral and spiritual disease, resulting from too long a period of wealth and power, producing cynicism, decline of religion, pessimism and frivolity." The empire is in demise. No sense of duty, no sense of country - selfishness reigns.

We have a choice. We can repeat history or we can learn from it. "We the people" have the power to force change, to get our country, our government back on track. "We the people" have the power to replace our complacency with involvement, our greed with service, our dependence with self-sufficiency. We need not follow the path of others. We need not fail our Founding Fathers, embarrassing them with our lack of character. We can break the mold. We can defy history.

Do we fade into mediocrity, our grandchildren wondering what happened to the once great United States of America? Or do we maintain our greatness? Our choice.