

## **America: The Farewell Tour - by Chris Hedges**

A profound and provocative examination of America in crisis, where unemployment, deindustrialization, and a bitter hopelessness and malaise have resulted in an epidemic of diseases of despair—drug abuse, gambling, suicide, magical thinking, xenophobia, and a culture of sadism and hate

Book Notes: Forces behind the decline of the U.S.

- 1) Political paralysis
- 2) Bloated militarism - hollowing out country from inside
- 3) Trump's turbo-charged kleptocracy
- 4) Decline of the US dollar; imports become expensive; economy seizes up

re: Alfred McCoy - 'micro-militarism.' Late-empires over-reach, militarily; "In the Shadows of the American Century."

- 5) Squeezing your population; see Joseph Tainter, "Collapse of complex societies." Extracting more and more from a population; calcification of democracy; stripping citizens of their rights; overturning rights by judicial fiat; i.e. Citizen's United.
- 6) Stazi-state; most surveilled; loss of privacy; See Hannan Arendt; Origins of totalitarianism; plight of the stateless; rights become privileges;
- 7) NADF and the overturn of the "Posse Commitatus Act," of 1874. ? NADF, allows military to seize US Citizens, strip them of due process and hold them locked up....  
Militarization of police forces....imposition of martial law or tyranny....
- 8) Corporatization stops at nothing; i.e. Standing Rock is example; response of the state was use of violence against non-violent protestors...

## **??? Trump is the symptom...not the disease???**

Rage, frustration, sense of betrayal are vehicles being used by trump to hold onto power....

Democratic party doesn't get it? Did Russia try and interfere?; trump is a product of grotesque, social inequality, which the dems do not want to address, because they are an arm of corporate power; dems do nothing to halt the cannibalization of the society. Taliban now controls more territory in Afghanistan, than before we went in?

Q & A: Empires do collapse; but why has this happened so quickly....what happened to "progress is inevitable?" Why can't it be turned around...

A: You had collapse of capitalism in 1930s; Roosevelt understood that if capitalism wouldn't create jobs, we'd better do that; corporate oligarchs made two mistakes; they recreated the Red Scare of WWI and brought it into the 1950s. This destroyed the popular radical movements that opened up democracy in the 20th century. Then they went after the liberal class; (see Hedges: Death of the Liberal Class); Then we got the great trader of neo-liberalism, Clinton; NAFTA, Deregulating the FCC; Commodities Futures Modernization Act; 1994 Omnibus Crime Bill; Glass-Steagall destroyed; Welfare Program reforms....By the 1970s we had already shifted from an empire of production to an empire of consumption.....

Q: What happened to any hope?

A. I have no faith in the restoration of hope. We have known about climate change since 1902 and we've done nothing. Implodes the idea of rational thinking.

A. You can't use the word hope if you have no plan to resist. It doesn't do us any good to grasp the mortal crisis; the great existential struggle of the moment;

A. The great rebels, held up the ideals; faith is the belief that the good draws to itself, the good. If we are going to resist successfully, we are going to have to believe the former even as everything around us gets worse.

A. We can't let that despair cripple; technology will not save us; that's as foolish as the denial of global warming

Q. What is your experience with RT?

A. See my book on the Christian Right; Trump has no ideology; he's in the early stages of dementia; he's filling the gaps with a "fascist ideology." It's all about hate, at its core. It has fused the Christian religion with the State. I'm not sure they will have civil strife, because without Trump, there is Pence. I don't think there will be civil strife; Christianized fascism will be more pronounced; PBS is now a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Koch Bros....Critics are being pushed to the margins of the internet....as they perfect the algorithms, the spaces for critics are being blacked out. Once we throw out net-neutrality, these so-called progressive, alternative sites, will be eventually blacklisted....

A. It not like there are not huge segments of the population that are not conscious. Even with the iron control of information, it's amazing how conscious people are; see the case of Vaclav Havel and the East German Stazi-state.

A. The lies are now so egregious and so transparent, that a marginal critic such as myself, now becomes a threat;

Q. What about the corporate control of the internet, today?

A. As despotic regimes increase their control.....answer unclear....

Q. Where does the left go from here? Jill Stein's name and reputation has been pretty much mugged...

A. We go to the street; we look at Standing Rock; all the great radical movements that were shut out of power, historically; people will say that Malcolm X was so radical...

When King said what he said in Montgomery, it meant that the next day he would be dead....we have to begin with "non-cooperation," we have to obstruct the workings of the corporate state; compare the tactics of the IWW; compare the Bonus Marchers; politics is a game of fear; we have to make them frightened of us....that's our job....