

Introduction



Earthquakes are predictable, their causes provable. Successful societies are similar — their demises are equally predictable, but the causes are only partially identifiable. And like an earthquake, a society’s demise can be dated . . . but only with hindsight. Few scientists, if any, would attempt to predict a major earthquake, its location, and its occurrence within fifteen years, since no one would believe them. The same fate awaits Cassandras who foresee catastrophic political and social changes fifteen years hence. So it is with me. Only time will determine whether *America’s Man on Horseback* is overstatement or understatement, fable or prophecy, cynicism or truth, demagoguery or enlightenment, horror or humor — satire or reality.

In 1846, James Polk was the eleventh U.S. president, Iowa became the twenty-ninth state in the Union, and war broke out between the United States and Mexico. Few Americans that year anticipated an American civil war fifteen years later, in 1861.

In 1926, Calvin Coolidge was the thirtieth president, U.S. Marines landed in Nicaragua to put down insurrection, and Colonel William “Billy” Mitchell, suspended from rank and duty for five years, resigned from the army. During that year of the Roaring Twenties, how many Americans dreamed that the United States would soon enter another world war? Billy Mitchell did.

During World War I, Mitchell was the outstanding combat air commander; he was highly decorated by the U.S. and foreign governments and was promoted to brigadier general in 1918. After World War I, as a peacetime colonel and assistant chief of the air service, he advocated a separate U.S. air force and greater preparedness for an inevitable, and imminent, second world war. Colonel Mitchell was court-martialed and convicted of insubordination in 1925 for privately and publicly voicing his unpopular views to a war-weary nation — a severe penalty, indeed, for envisioning World War II early. (And in 1926, only a few astute investors made themselves ready for the stock market crash three years later.)

In 1950, President Harry Truman held office, the United States recognized the new state of Vietnam and sent advisers there to teach the use of weapons to the Vietnamese, and American forces under General Douglas MacArthur were committed to the war in Korea. Americans that year had no idea that in just fifteen years the nation would enter into hostilities with North Vietnam that would end in defeat.

Today, President William Clinton sits in the Oval Office, inflation is “under control,” and the stock market regularly sets new highs. (In spite of this, more than a few sophisticated investors, particularly older ones, realize that no stock market rises forever.) Tectonic stress continues to build along the San Andreas Fault, little different from the escalating social tensions that have been building in the nation for a generation and a half. In time both will erupt. And in fifteen years, the *political* reverberations may be more violent than any earthquake in California.

In *America's Man on Horseback*, I anticipate that conditions will worsen ten times by 2013. Instead of one-at-a-time race riots in Los Angeles, New York, or the District of Columbia, sack-and-burn racial anarchy will explode in ten major cities simultaneously. There will be ten times as many corrupt politicians holding office and ten times as many financial scams. Inflation will increase tenfold. Gang warfare, illegal drug use, murder, rape, robbery, and terrorism will be ten times as bad.

Of course this grim scenario contradicts the majesty of 1998 America, with its modern communications, resplendent technology, conspicuous wealth, and the “safety” of mutual fund invest-

ments, which most Americans believe make “today” so much different and better than “yesterday.” So who but a fool could make a comparison between this magnificent achievement and other great, but failed, societies? Perhaps too many pay attention to the obscure and too few to the obvious. One during my time went so far as to say that “he [who looks to history] makes the mistake of extending the same trend into the future that has gone on in the past, failing to recognize the many moderating influences that a society and its many parts provide in such a situation.” Or, as Henry Ford scoffed, “History is more or less bunk,” confirming this deep, unshakable belief that the United States is immune from the lessons of history.

So while a dictator is a historically sound proposition, and while this single premise of “ten times worse than today” makes the idea of a “man on horseback” to rein in an out-of-control nation plausible, and perhaps even attractive, it will be a difficult “first” for this nation and its citizens.

Should social conditions deteriorate that dramatically, what actions would you expect the then president to take to “clean up the mess”? How should he deal with crime and punishment, corrupt politicians, crooked lawyers, dishonest investment bankers, gangs, race riots, and domestic and foreign terrorism? What about inflation, immigration problems, and the abandonment of the American work ethic?

What advice would *you* give the “man on horseback”? Would you couch your counsel in politically correct terms? Even speaking to a dictator? Perhaps you would speak more bluntly if you or a family member had been the victim of a burglary, robbery, financial scam, or corporate high-handedness. Others might speak with outright anger — relatives or friends of homicide victims, particularly parents of murdered children; family members whose loved ones were maimed or killed by drunk drivers; parents of hemophiliac children infected with AIDS through blood transfusions; women who were raped. And how would members of our armed forces, particularly marines, respond?

Should, in time, a dictator assume power and reign over America, people will certainly then ask, “Why weren’t we warned?”

History tells us that warnings are not only naive but wasteful.

Just as the Greeks of the Hellenistic period ignored Polybius, contemporary Americans are equally inattentive, for, as Alexis de Tocqueville made clear, “It is very difficult to make the inhabitants of democracies listen when one is not talking about themselves. They do not hear what is said to them because they are always very preoccupied with what they are doing. . . . Whenever conditions are equal, public opinion brings immense weight to bear on every individual. It surrounds, directs, and oppresses him.” But over time, and without fail, public opinion does change.

America’s Man on Horseback offers no suggestions for correcting the social ills of contemporary society. Will it serve as a “wake-up call”? Possibly, but doubtful, since many of those asleep believe that they are only “resting their eyes.” As with previous successful civilizations at their crest, it appears that the agents of America’s decline are too entrenched to be reversed. Nevertheless, I wish to provoke anger in the reader, to evoke strong personal emotion, heighten individual awareness — whether the anger is directed at politicians, as I suggest, or at me. (When Jonathan Swift, the greatest satirist in the English language, published his essay *A Modest Proposal* in aid of Ireland, he became the most reviled person in Europe. Few recognized his satire; Swift himself became the target.)

It will not be easy to find a reader who values the whole of *America’s Man on Horseback*. Still, there will be individuals who recognize and appreciate parts of it. Moreover, as national circumstances and public opinion continue to change, the book may spark new interest and discussion, one chapter at a time. It may awaken in many Americans dormant thoughts of unease brought about by the decadence and corruption narcotizing our nation. It may offer a catharsis to those Americans harmed by current conditions. And it may even provide the thoughtful and receptive with insights on how to protect themselves and their families from vicissitudes created by conditions ten times worse than those faced today.

One cited purpose of Machiavelli’s when he wrote his “little book” *The Prince* was to secure employment. This is not the case with me; I work for myself and my needs are more modest. Nor do I fear a military court martial such as Colonel Mitchell faced; it has been many years since I served in the U.S. Navy. Does *America’s*

Man on Horseback represent my wishes for the future of this great nation? Certainly not! American democracy has allowed me to fare better than my greatest childhood ambitions.

When America's "man on horseback" prevails, he may find interesting what I attribute as the cause of our nation's decline. The "man" may even consider humorous my views of contemporary America. Beyond this — other than the premise that an American dictator will emerge between 2013 and 2029 — all that you read is writer's fancy. I tiptoe here and there, but I lack the courage to describe the real "man on horseback." If I were to depict his true draconian potential, it would be ten times worse than any I outline in this book . . . and no one would believe me.

[CHAPTER ONE]

Greetings and Salutations



The time will arrive when decadence and lawlessness become so pervasive that even angels are burned by corruption. Then comes America's Man on Horseback.

GUY ODOM

Welcome, Mr. President. America has watched and waited ten generations for your arrival!

I know not the final episode that delivered the presidency of the United States of America to you. Whether you were elected as president or were the vice president when the president abdicated, committed suicide, or was assassinated; or whether you became president by another path — this matters not. Your presidency emanated from the electoral process.

With the histories of failed civilizations on my side, I expect your inauguration to take place around the year 2013. It is doubtful, though possible, that you will arrive earlier, but surely no later than 2029. Chaotic conditions make it so.

Your defenders laugh and tell funny stories while the opposition cries foul. As you savor your inauguration, your enemies denounce you as America's first dictator. Your supporters celebrate and proclaim you the deliverer and the emancipator. Some of your more revenge-minded followers hail you as the prosecutor.

But you are above politics. You are America's Man on Horseback. You act, not merely talk.

DURING the middle years of the country's first 250-year cycle, sages feared your advent, expecting an oppressor or a tyrant. Per-

haps the first American-to-be to anticipate you was an illegitimate sixteen-year-old counting clerk in a West Indies trading company in 1771. At that time he wrote, "A Prime Minister, like a Commander in Chief . . . I think this wise regulation a wholesome restraint on the people, whose turbulence at times . . . requires a Dictator." Alexander Hamilton went on to become the most important aide-de-camp to General George Washington during the Revolutionary War — the Age of Outburst of the American Republic — and later he became one of the principal authors of the United States Constitution. Hamilton was the strongest advocate of the provisions that created the office of the president in which the powers of commander in chief of the armed forces are vested.

George Washington, a "man on horseback," was our country's first liberator. Since 1964, after the nation's ninth generation emerged and the Age of Decadence began, the longing of U.S. citizens for the accession of the second liberator became more compelling as turbulence increased and the cry for order became more strident.

It is inevitable that you became president at this fated time in our nation's history. The limited options available left Americans little choice but you. Your ascendancy begins as America's Age of Decadence ends — a time when the country is not worth dying for; when the dishonest prosper and the honest suffer; when faint-hearted politicians jabber, babble, and stall while criminals steal, rape, and murder with impunity. Frivolity and license prevail. The people turn to you because security and safety have become more important than freedom. You rise to power because history repeats itself. Niccolo Machiavelli anticipated 1998 America when he wrote:

. . . all the past evils and all the other disorders that appear in it. First, there is neither union nor friendship, except among those who have knowingly committed some wickedness either against their fatherland or against private persons. And because religion and fear of God have been eliminated in all, an oath and faith given last only as long as they are useful; so men make use of them not to observe them but to serve as a means of being able

to deceive more easily. And the more easily and surely the deception succeeds, the more glory and praise is acquired from it; by this, harmful men are praised as industrious and good men are blamed as fools. And truly, all that can be corrupted and that can corrupt others is thrown together; the young are lazy, the old lascivious; both sexes at every age are full of foul customs, for which good laws, because they are spoiled by wicked use, are no remedy.

You have promised to deliver the honest, hardworking, law-abiding minority from their persecution by the ungodly and the unconscionable, who constitute a near-majority of Americans at your ascendancy. You will stop the criminal terrorism of Americans, not simply mouth platitudes such as “build more prisons” or “prevent crime.” No longer will America’s public schools be used as holding pens while futilely attempting to teach children to “just say no” to drugs, stealing, and killing. No longer will truces be negotiated among the leaders of America’s ethnic slaughter. Your vow to stop crime pits you against millions of dishonest Americans.

Because of your reputation for action, even unscrupulous Americans, in fear of violent criminals, support you rather than your opponents. Dishonest Americans — welfare defrauders, income tax cheats, corporate destroyers of the environment, and others — will suffer even the devil if they believe he will keep them in the land of the living.

You have become president partially because of your aspirations but mainly because the bad — out of avarice and ambition — and the good — out of necessity — participated in ruining America. As George Washington freed America from 6.7 million Britishers, you have promised to free the nation from the clutches of five times that number of criminals and politicians. You have vowed to liberate Americans from the destroyers of freedom.

You are the first president empowered to rid the country of crime and punish all criminals, whether violent or nonviolent, who rob Americans of their lives, their safety, and their livelihoods. Even Thomas Jefferson foresaw radical changes:

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shown, that Mankind are more disposed to suffer, while Evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the Forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evidences a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security.

Mr. President, you are the new guard for American security. And you will succeed. Mao Tse-tung confronted two and a half times more millions than you; he succeeded. But avoid the excesses of an older Mao Tse-tung who, after revolutionary fervor diminished, murdered millions to retain precarious control of his faltering regime.

While different from Mao's, your task is equally enormous. As the nation simultaneously ends one ten-generation cycle and begins another, you will be the one to bury the shed skin of the despairing and decadent Republic and midwife the birth of an Empire.

You, America's Man on Horseback, will make whole again a fragmented America that has lost its way. Only you can restore our one language, one broad-based culture, one common identity. Since it is impossible to legislate morality, your virtuous undertakings will serve as an example and remind all of their obligations. I trust that you

- Are God-fearing
- Value righteousness
- Cherish justice
- Are calm and serene
- Do not vacillate
- Do not experience fear
- Cherish the principle of self-control
- Have neither narrow predilections nor obstinate antipathies

- Do not seek personal revenge
- Give advance warning of unpleasant actions to come
- Benefit the population on the whole with your necessary cruelties
- Confer proper rewards on deserving men
- Are dignified but not proud
- Are firm and resolute and slow of speech

Granted, these values are utopian, and you have great needs for power and control. You are what you are, and you are in control. Become neither loved nor feared by all Americans. Love is an emotion that can be withdrawn, and fear crystallizes into hate. You must gain first the respect of America's good people and later their trust; it is a greater tribute to be trusted than to be loved. You will earn the respect of honest, hard-working Americans by freeing them from government bureaucracy, high taxation, and oppression. The respect of the indolent will come, begrudgingly, over time, as a matter of course. And you will gain the respect of criminals only through cruelty, as they respect only what they fear; that criminals will hate you is inconsequential.

As you orchestrate America's transition from a dying Republic to a dynamic Empire, I offer knowledge of people and situations. I do not offer advice. Wise leaders do well to avoid unsolicited advice. Counselors think first of their own personal interests; only by accident do they consider your interests when offering unsolicited advice. It is different, however, when you ask for their ideas about specific situations. Your advisers should know that you accept nothing but the truth when you seek knowledge; then they will be honored that you desire their opinions. As you validate the worth of their ideas with action, you will bring out the best in your cohorts. But be careful to divorce yourself from flatterers and fools alike. Their conversations can lead at best to wasting your time, at worst to wasting your head.

I cannot be a member of your cabinet; I am not even a member of your time. If I am still in the land of the living at your presidency, I will be aged and have nothing of additional value to offer you. I will never respond with "I told you so," as I am only ink on

paper; and I cannot betray a confidence nor reveal a confidential conversation. But I can help you as no other can as you pursue your goals.

The differences among my time, your time, and earlier times mean nothing. An overlooked idea of Plato can become an idea of yours. Your thoughts can travel along the same path as did the thoughts of Marcus Aurelius. I offer my services to glean history's granary of knowledge and bring you clean kernels of truth.

I endeavor to express my thoughts purely and concisely; I write in a simple and direct manner. I wish only to awaken in you the ideas that now lie dormant in your mind. I also want to offer caution against using those base beliefs that destroyed important leaders before you. At your leisure, turn a page for counsel; close the book when you tire.

Why do I offer this help? Altruism has little appeal to me. Just as you determine the worth of my words by acting on that about which I write, so too will you decide if I truly have lent you a hand. If so, I then will make a modest request of you.

SINCE 1976, I have anticipated your arrival. In the two centuries since Alexander Hamilton, others have as well, but I am the first to recognize you, to write to you, to wish you well. You are destined to redeem the United States, to reinstate the values of America of yore, and to protect this wonderful country from its enemies inside and outside its borders. I hail America's Man on Horseback.

Though it is 1998 as I write, I see you clearly, and I know you well, and I address you at the time of your presidency. I can describe you closely, though not with absolute certainty. You are around forty-five years of age. You served in the military. You exhibit a no-nonsense demeanor. You are not and never have been a fashion figure. People picture you no differently from how the contemporaries of Charlemagne, Genghis Khan, George Washington, Napoleon, Hitler, Churchill, or Stalin pictured them.

Your mother did not sleep with poisonous snakes nor have your father assassinated, as did Alexander's mother, Olympia. She did not terrify you with stories of demons while she beat you for breaking her rules, as did Luther's mother. Your demanding mother insisted that you excel — from infancy on — at everything

she had you attempt. Possibly she became your friend, as did Napoleon's mother. Your mother inflicted corporal punishment when you crossed her or thwarted her demands. At the same time she likely enveloped you with praise for early childhood accomplishments. Your dominant mother knew even before your birth that you were destiny's golden child. And you have not failed her.

My conjecture about your past is not of importance to either of us, however. Your future task absorbs your mind and spirit; I speak to that purpose.

Who am I? View me as the child in the fable of the emperor's new clothes. I have the liberty to say exactly what I think because it is inconceivable that I could ever be a threat to you. I bring to your table (1) a superior knowledge of human behavior so as to explain history and predict future human affairs; (2) the ability to draw a pragmatic picture of the foibles of human behavior in my time; (3) the fruits of my research and studies and the predictability of the outcome of the tenth generation of splendid but failed civilizations; and (4) the guidance to help ensure that your historical reputation does not limit you to becoming a seventy-five-year man, as was Lenin, nor a 500-year man, as was Napoleon, nor even a 1000-year man, as was Julius Caesar. Neither should you be only a 2000-year man, as were Alexander and Charlemagne. Your impact on the world will be a thousand times greater than one of those seismic jolts that comes no more than once a millennium. It is important that God not weary of you early, as he did of Alexander, Caesar, and Napoleon.

Indeed, your ascendancy gives birth to a mighty transformation. But recognize that even those who champion change have secret doubts. It is only after repeated successes, as Machiavelli observed, that "men will be more ready to pursue a thing in motion than to move it." You will need a full thirty years to fulfill your destiny. Human nature has not deviated during the five centuries since Machiavelli wrote that "it has always been easier to maintain a power that by length of time has eliminated envy than to raise up a new one that for many causes could easily be eliminated." Your expanding reputation and initial successes will draw many to you; only the foolish will resist you. Remember also that human nature sympathizes with failure and resents success.

When confronting a problem, it is best to position yourself to choose the most advantageous of positive options. Failing that, it is still appealing to decide between a positive and a negative choice. The worst possible situation is where all options are negative — having to cull rather than being able to select, having to decide on a perilous course rather than facing certain danger. I can help you to foresee and thus avoid such situations.

Of course, the surest way to prevent failures is never to take chances. Yet inaction guarantees failure, and you are here because you are a risk taker. I offer nothing to diminish the risks; rather, I entreat you to take greater risks, and take them earlier. Fortune will reward you commensurately.

YOUR willingness to take risks and to inflict pain, without regret or sorrow, yet with restraint, will place you on the crest of the first wave when America's tide turns. Move swiftly to secure and then expand your power. First, address crime and lawlessness throughout our nation; then, act to end ongoing domestic crises and remedy chronic problems. Next, establish discipline and new codes of conduct in order to sever the grip of decadence and make the new empire strong. In time you will be the sole arbiter of American good and evil.

Farther down the road your successes will herald a period of peace and quiet for our nation. But tranquility for America means travail for you. Domestic enemies, long submerged, will use such periods of calm to surface and attempt to undo you. Inevitably, terror as an agency to maintain control will move through your mind — from temptation to contemplation to implementation. Do not deceive yourself into thinking that you can maintain control for thirty years without utilizing this tool of terror.

At some future time you will preside over America's rebirth. With your leadership, our country stands to achieve a never-before-imagined greatness. May I serve you?