

GNITN

How America Dies

How America Collapses – Rising Bureaucracy

A Revolution Over Taxes

Many of us commonly believe that the American Revolution started because of being taxed too much. And the seminal moment was the Boston Tea Party which came after the Boston Massacre. One didn't necessarily lead to the other, but it was the rebellious spirit that was the real takeaway of both. We know that the 13 colonies would find more reasons to want to forge their own destinies than being taxed on tea, however movements have touch points that ring throughout history and represent a turning point in events. In this case the destroying of tea was the symbol of the colonists finally saying enough is enough. They wanted to be involved in the decisions that affected them and Britain didn't see it that way. The colonies were just another one of their expansions in the world and should be treated as such. Interestingly, it was the financial debt in Britain that drove the incessant taxes on things like paper, and then to taxing more common goods like paint, paper, glass, lead and, of course, tea, which the colonists loved to drink. It was the economic woes of the reigning super power in the world that started what would be the current super power in history. Yes, this is a simple way of summing it up, but it leads to our main point, and that is that the growing weight of bureaucracy is part of the fall of any nation. America is now on that list as we will see now.

Governments Simply Get Too Big

We know that a bloated organization of any sort can start to collapse under the weight of its own size and that the pressure to maintain or expand its power. Yes, there are good things to come from regulations, but when the system to provide such good expands and expands, it of course needs resources all by itself. Where do those funds come from? Taxes. Private businesses run things based on providing services or goods that people want or need. But they can't just provide them for free or they wouldn't last long at all. Government on the other hand can create their own "business" without the pressure of where the money comes from because they can just raise taxes from those who are actually making money. Make no mistake about it, the government is big business all by itself. Every national political season, candidates parade around the country promising to downsize the federal bureaucracy by cutting this or cutting that, by eliminating this program or that program, or even whole departments that they deem to be non-essential. It sounds good in theory and can get a lot of applause and even votes, but when push comes to shove, these agencies are run and supported by people. And these people vote. Eliminate their jobs and you lose their votes. Cutting red tape also means cutting jobs. I think you see the conundrum a politician of any stripe faces.

It Wasn't Always This Way

In his writing [titled](#) *The Rise of the Bureaucratic State*, author *James Q. Wilson* tells us how small the government was initially:

During its first 150 years, the American republic was not thought to have a "bureaucracy," and thus it would have been meaningless to refer to the problems" of a "bureaucratic state." There were, of course, appointed civilian officials. Though only about 3,000 at the end of the Federalist period, there were about 95,000 by the time Grover Cleveland assumed office in 1881, and nearly half a million by 1925. Some aspects of these numerous officials were regarded as problems—notably, the standards by which they were appointed and the political loyalties to which they were held—but these were thought to be matters of proper character and good management. The great political and

constitutional struggles were not over the power of the administrative apparatus, but over the power of the President, of Congress, and of the states.

Wilson would go on to note how little departments existed in the beginning:

The original departments were small and had limited duties. The State Department, the first to be created, had but nine employees in addition to the Secretary. The War Department did not reach 80 civilian employees until 1801; it commanded only a few thousand soldiers. Only the Treasury Department had substantial powers—it collected taxes, managed the public debt, ran the national bank, conducted land surveys, and purchased military supplies. Because of this, Congress gave the closest scrutiny to its structure and its activities.

Nine employees? 80 civilian employees? To be fair, the country wasn't the size it is today, but the scale to population for the number of people who run the departments we have today is nothing like it was then.

Big Business Indeed

In his [article](#) *Bureaucratic Failure in the Federal Government* author Chris Edwards tells us just how large the federal government is now:

The federal government spends almost \$4 trillion a year. It has hundreds of agencies and runs more than 2,300 subsidy programs.¹ It employs 2.1 million civilian workers, 1.4 million uniformed military personnel, and 560,000 postal workers. It is a huge organization.

I am throwing a lot of figures and facts at you that are really impersonal. I am fully aware that there are people doing these jobs and many of us either hold those jobs now or had them at one time. This critique is not meant to say that bad people hold these jobs or that no good comes from any of them. Far from it. The overarching point is that a lot of nations create things that could be done better and simpler if they were held to the same standards of a successful private sector business. In fact, some people think that privatizing a great deal of these departments would go a long way to solving our problems in this area. Making that transition though, would be a huge task and unfortunately, many politicians would rather maintain the status quo and keep their own jobs rather than risk not winning the next election if it meant the long term health of the country. Of course, when being in politics is your only skill, the outlook for change dims substantially.

Low View Of Federal Government

In the same article by Edwards we read this:

Most Americans think that the federal government does a poor job. Only one-third of people believe that it gives competent service, and people think that more than half of the tax dollars sent to Washington are wasted. The public's "customer satisfaction" with federal services is lower than their satisfaction with nearly all private services. After studying polling data, Yale University law professor Peter Schuck concluded, "the public views the federal government as a chronically clumsy, ineffectual, bloated giant that cannot be counted upon to do the right thing, much less do it well."

He says that the public's low regard of government is justified by how often it fails:

This poor view of the federal government is not surprising given its many high-profile failures. In recent years, scandals have erupted at the Department of Veteran's Affairs, Internal Revenue Service, Secret Service, and other agencies. Federal auditors regularly uncover waste, fraud, and abuse in many departments, and federal projects often have large cost overruns.

In a 2014 report, Paul Light of the Brookings Institution studied dozens of federal failures, including the response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the botched launch of HealthCare.gov in 2013, and the ongoing mismanagement of veterans' health care. He found that the number of such failures has increased over the years and "have become so common that they are less of a shock to the public than an expectation."

According to Edwards, Schuck explains why such failures occur:

Many programs are not delivering promised results, and they have costs that are higher than the benefits. Schuck concluded that federal performance is "dismal" and failure is "endemic."

Why It Should Concern Us

When our country relies on these programs and services more and more, it represents a major control of our lives. It really does go back to the aforementioned Boston Tea Party that happened way back in 1773, it really wasn't the actual tea that was the problem, it was the control of it by way of taxes that drove the Sons of Liberty to act. However, the focus now is that our economy depends on it as described in another quote from the Edwards article:

Federal failure is a critical issue because the government controls so many aspects of our lives. Federal spending represents more than one-fifth of the nation's economic output, and federal regulations infiltrate many state, local, and private activities. When the government fails, it can create widespread harm.

And now you can see why it is a major cause of nations falling from prominence on the world stage. Left unchecked, our economy will eventually collapse under the weight of these government excesses.

It's Not For Lack Of Effort

As I said earlier, politicians have tried to reign in the size of government as seen in these details from Edward's short essay:

Many presidents have tried to improve executive branch efficiency. President Theodore Roosevelt appointed the Keep Commission in 1905 to improve federal management. In a message to Congress, Roosevelt said, "There is every reason why our executive government machinery should be at least as well-planned, economical, and efficient as the best machinery of the great business organizations, which at present is not the case." The president was expressing Progressive-era optimism in government, but, as we have seen, such optimism is misguided.

President William Howard Taft appointed a Committee on Economy and Efficiency in 1910. Then there was President Franklin Roosevelt's Brownlow Commission in the 1930s, President Harry Truman's and President Dwight Eisenhower's Hoover Commissions in the 1940s and 1950s, President Ronald Reagan's Grace Commission in the 1980s, and Vice President Albert Gore's "Reinventing Government" project in the 1990s. President George W. Bush had a "management agenda" that examined the effectiveness of programs. And President Barack Obama promised in his 2011 State of the Union address to create "a government that's more competent and more efficient. ... My administration will develop a proposal to merge, consolidate, and reorganize the federal government in a way that best serves the goal of a more competitive America."

Despite all those efforts, the performance of the executive branch may be getting worse today, not better.

Destined To Fail

The recipe for failure in a burgeoning government is basically from an absence of profit, absence of losses, it is essentially a monopoly, lax oversight, massive red tape, and bureaucratic layering just to name a few. They are held captive by little to no power to downsize staff and outside influences of special interests that hold their attention rather than working for the general public. I could detail all of these and more, but that isn't the point of this lesson. The point is that this is yet another nail in the coffin for America and one I fear can't be fixed. *Edwards* does see some hope and says so this way:

In sum, the federal bureaucracy has many features that contribute to poor performance and failure. Members of Congress may wish that the programs they dream up are delivered to their constituents in an efficient manner by expert civil servants, but that is not how the government actually works much of the time. Congress should try to improve government management, but it is more important for legislators to focus on ending or privatizing federal activities.

The Bible actually said this would happen in the last days when the Apostle Paul warned his young protégé Timothy in [2 Timothy 3:1-2](#):

You may as well know this too, Timothy, that in the last days it is going to be very difficult to be a Christian. 2 For people will love only themselves and their money... (TLB)

We see in that nefarious list the phrase “people will love only themselves and their money” and that is the reason why no government reform will happen in my opinion. That love of money will unfortunately win out over common sense, especially in the halls of power.

Biblical Examples: Nehemiah 5

In a news [report](#) by *ABCnews.com* we read this:

Billy McCormack, founding member of the Christian Coalition of America, said the most relevant biblical passage against debt is Nehemiah 5:3-5. Quoting partially from the passage, he said, Americans are "mortgaging our fields, our vineyards and our homes to get grain during the famine.

"We are subjecting our sons and daughters to slavery, because our fields and our vineyards belong to others. China has a mortgage on the future of our children," said McCormack.

It's not right for a foreign land to own so much of what is ours. Because we were irresponsible, we have to pay the price."

McCormack does not blame either Republicans or Democrats for our growing national debt, but he points to an overall culture of selfishness and recklessness...It is all a matter of irresponsibility. People have been kicking the can down the road to this moment. Now the can is gone. We can't kick it anymore."

Biblical Examples: Lovers Of Money

Here is a short breakdown of what the problem is and how, without God's intervention, it won't change. You see the word for “love” from “lovers of themselves” is also used in relation to money. It is slightly different as it is [philárgyros](#) (fil-ar'-goo-ros) from 5384 /*philos*, “lover” and 696 /*árgyros*, “of silver”) – properly, a lover of money (literally, silver) – i.e. someone (literally) “in love with personal gain (having money).” Again, this is fairly easy to define, but in combination with lovers of themselves we see a pattern that makes sense. The object of the love is different but the root is very much the same and the goal is in line with the prideful nature of their concerns. If we want change for our country by downsizing our debt by addressing in meaningful ways the rising bureaucracy, this love of money needs to be nipped in the bud in those we elect. But when we as believers have this same issue in us, those prayers will not likely either happen or be effectual and sadly, we will vote for people who will continue the proverbial gravy train of government handouts. And by doing so, aid in the collapse of America.