

THE SORROWS OF EMPIRE

Chalmers Johnson, *the Sorrows of Empier* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2004),

Chalmers Johnson served as President of the Japan Policy Research Institute and professor emeritus at the University of California, San Diego. His previous books include *MITI and the Japanese Miracle* and *Japan: Who Governs?*

The first Iraq war (Gulf War) produced four classes of casualties – killed in action, wounded in action, killed in accidents (including “friendly fire”), and injuries and illness that appeared only after the end of hostilities. During 1990 and 1991, some 696,778 individuals served in the Persian Gulf as elements of Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. Of these 148 were killed in battle, 467 were wounded in action, and 145 were killed in accidents, producing a total of 760 casualties, quite a low number given the scale of the operation.

As of May 2002, however, the Veterans Administration reported that an additional 8,306 soldiers had died and 159,705 were injured or ill as result of service-connected “exposures” suffered during the war. Even more alarmingly, the VA revealed that 206,861 veterans, almost a third of General Norman Schwarzkof’s entire army, had filed claims for medical care, compensation, and pension benefits based on injuries and illness caused by combat in 1991. 168,011 applicants were classified as “disabled veterans.”

Chalmers Johnson, *THE SORROWS OF EMPIRE* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2004), 100.

FOUR SORROWS ARE POINTED OUT IN HIS BOOK “*THE SORROWS OF EMPIRE*” BY CAHLMERS JOHNSON, PRESIDENT OF THE JAPAN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE AND PROFESSOR EMERITUS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO.

“For us, the sorrows of empire may prove to be the inescapable consequence of the path of our elites chose after September 11, 2001. Militarism and imperialism always bring with them sorrows. The ubiquitous symbol of the Christian religion, the cross, is perhaps the world’s most famous reminder of one sorrow that accompanied the Roman Empire. Roman imperial sorrows mounted up over hundreds of years. Ours are likely arrive with the speed of FedEx. If present trends continue, four sorrows are certain to be visited on the United States.

1. There will be a state of perpetual war, leading to more terrorism against Americans wherever they may be and growing reliance on weapons of mass destruction among smaller nations as they try to ward off the imperial juggernaut.
2. There will be a loss of democracy and constitutional rights as the presidency fully eclipses Congress and is itself transformed from an “executive branch” of government into something more like a Pantagonized presidency.
3. An already well-shredded principle of truthfulness will increasingly be replaced

by a system of propaganda, disinformation, and glorification of war, power, and the military legions.

4. There will be bankruptcy, as we pour our economic resources into ever more grandiose military projects and short-change the education, health, and safety of our fellow citizens. *The future, is as yet unmade. All these trends can be resisted and other – better – futures can certainly be imagined. But it is important to be as clear-eyed as possible about what the present choices and the present path of our imperial leaders portend.*

Chalmers Johnson, *THE SORROWS OF EMPIRE* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2004), 284-285.

He offers suggestions:

The future, is as yet unmade. All these trends can be resisted and other – better – futures can certainly be imagined. But it is important to be as clear-eyed as possible about what the present choices and the present path of our imperial leaders portend.¹ There is one development that could conceivably stop this process of overreaching: the people could retake control of Congress, reform it along with the corrupted election laws that have made it into a forum for special interests, turn it into a genuine assembly of democratic representatives, and cut off the supply of money to the Pentagon and the secret intelligence agencies. We have a strong civil society that could, in theory, overcome the entrenched interests of the armed forces and the military-industrial complex. At this late date, however, it is difficult to imagine how Congress, much like Roman senate in the last days of the republic, could be brought back to life and cleansed of its endemic corruption. Failing such a reform, Nemesis, the goddess of retribution and vengeance, the punisher of pride and hubris, waits impatiently for her meeting with us.²

¹ Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2004), 284-285.

² Johnson, *Sorrows of Empire*, 312.