



Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic

By Chalmers Johnson

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A *New York Times* bestseller, *Nemesis* is Chalmers Johnson's "fiercest book?and his best" (Andrew J. Bacevich)

In his prophetic book *Blowback*, Chalmers Johnson linked the CIA's clandestine activities abroad to disaster at home. In *The Sorrows of Empire*, he explored the ways in which the growth of American militarism and the garrisoning of the planet have jeopardized our stability. In *Nemesis*, the bestselling and final volume in what has become known as the Blowback Trilogy, he shows how imperial overstretch is undermining the republic itself, both economically and politically.

Delving into new areas?from plans to militarize outer space to Constitution-breaking presidential activities at home and the devastating corruption of a toothless Congress?*Nemesis* offers a striking description of the trap into which the reckless ambitions of America's leaders have taken us. Johnson confronts questions of pressing urgency: What are the unintended consequences of our dependence on a permanent war economy? What does it mean when a nation's main intelligence organization becomes the president's secret army? Or when the globe's sole "hyperpower" becomes the greatest hyper-debtor of all times?

Writing "as if the very existence of the nation is at stake" (*San Francisco Chronicle*), Johnson offers his most "bracing" and "important" (*Los Angeles Times*) exploration of the crisis facing America.

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Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic By Chalmers Johnson Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Like ancient Rome, America is saddled with an empire that is fatally undermining its republican government, argues Johnson (*The Sorrows of Empire*), in this bleak jeremiad. He surveys the trappings of empire: the brutal war of choice in Iraq and other foreign interventions going back decades; the militarization of space; the hundreds of overseas U.S. military bases full of "swaggering soldiers who brawl and sometimes rape." At home, the growth of an "imperial presidency," with the CIA as its "private army," has culminated in the Bush administration's resort to warrantless wiretaps, torture, a "gulag" of secret CIA prisons and an unconstitutional arrogation of "dictatorial" powers, while a corrupt Congress bows like the Roman Senate to Caesar. Retribution looms, the author warns, as the American economy, dependent on a bloated military-industrial complex and foreign borrowing, staggers toward bankruptcy, maybe a military coup. Johnson's is a biting, often effective indictment of some ugly and troubling features of America's foreign policy and domestic politics. But his doom-laden trope of empire ("the capacity for things to get worse is limitless.... the American republic may be coming to its end") seems overstated. With Bush a lame duck, not a Caesar, and his military adventures repudiated by the electorate, the Republic seems more robust than Johnson allows. (Feb.)

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From [Booklist](#)

The third book in a series begun with *Blowback* (2000), which predicted harsh comeuppance for the post-cold war American "global empire," and *The Sorrows of Empire* (2004), which continued Johnson's thesis with a lambasting of American militarism pre- and post-September 11, this book continues the author's broad condemnation of American foreign policy by warning of imminent constitutional and economic collapse. In a chapter analyzing "comparative imperial pathologies," Johnson reminds readers of Hannah Arendt's point that successful imperialism requires that democratic systems give way to tyranny and asserts that the U.S. must choose between giving up its empire of military bases (as did Britain after World War II) or retaining the bases at the expense of its democracy (as did Rome). Johnson also predicts dire consequences should the U.S. continue to militarize low Earth orbits in pursuit of security. To some extent a timely response to recent arguments in favor of American empire, such as those of Niall Ferguson in *Colossus*, this account also reiterates Johnson's perennial concerns about overseas military bases, the CIA, and the artifice of a defense-fueled economy. *Brendan Driscoll*

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Review

"Chalmers Johnson, a patriot who pulls no punches, has emerged as our most prescient critic of American empire and its pretensions. *Nemesis* is his fiercest book--and his best." ?*Andrew J. Bacevich, author of The New American Militarism*

"*Nemesis*, the final volume in the remarkable *Blowback* trilogy, completes a true patriot's anguished and devastating critique of the militarism that threatens to destroy the United States from within. In detail and with unflinching candor, Chalmers Johnson decries the discrepancies between what America professes to be and what it has actually become?a global empire of military bases and operations; a secret government increasingly characterized by covert activities, enormous 'black' budgets, and near dictatorial executive power; a misguided republic that has betrayed its noblest ideals and most basic founding principals in pursuit

of disastrously conceived notions of security, stability, and progress.”?John Dower, author of *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* “Chalmers Johnson’s voice has never been more urgently needed, and in *Nemesis* it rings with eloquence, clarity, and truth.”?James Carroll, author of *House of War* “*Nemesis* is a stimulating, sweeping study in which Johnson asks a most profound strategic question: Can we maintain the global dominance we now regard as our natural right? His answer is chilling. You do not have to agree with everything Johnson says?I don’t?but if you agree with even half of his policy critiques, you will still slam the book down on the table, swearing, ‘We have to change this!’” ?Joseph Cirincione, Senior Vice President for National Security and International Policy, Center for American Progress

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“*Nemesis* is a five-alarm warning about flaming militarism, burning imperial attitudes, secret armies, and executive arrogance that has torched and consumed the Constitution and brought the American Republic to death's door. Johnson shares a simple, liberating, and healing path back to worthy republicanism. But the frightening and heart-breaking details contained in *Nemesis* suggest that the goddess of retribution will not be so easily satisfied before ‘the right order of things’ is restored.” ?*Karen Kwiatkowski, retired U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel*

“Last fall a treasonous Congress gave the president license to kidnap, torture--you name it--on an imperial scale. All of us, citizens and non-citizens alike, are fair game. Kudos for not being silent, Chalmers, and for completing your revealing trilogy with undaunted courage.” ?*Ray McGovern, former CIA analyst; co-founder of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS)*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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