

THE COMING WARLORDS by Kurt Saxon copyright 1978

When governments fail, or are too weak to control the outlying provinces, warlords arise and take over those regions where there is no order. Throughout the Middle Ages in Europe and England, men little better than bandit chieftains established their rule over populations too weak to protect themselves.

Lest the king bring together his troops and wipe out these bandits, they often pledged a kind of loose loyalty to the Crown and were given sanction to keep their territory. The king often granted such titles because the region wasn't worth his effort to conquer it. This was Feudalism and the warlords became titled lords and servants of the king and had the power of life and death over their subjects.

The warlord part came in because neighboring bandits, or even other sanctioned lords were a constant threat to the territory. So the warlord had to be fighting off competitors on a pretty constant basis.

In China, for quite awhile before Sun Yat Sen took over in 1911, that large country, too, was controlled by bandit warlords, often with no sanction from the weak central government.

Nearly every American Indian chief was a warlord.

With the formation of a strong central government, governors are appointed or elected. Since they can be recalled by the central government or voted out of office, they cannot be considered warlords.

Heads of regional National Guard units are the nearest thing we have to warlords. They are held in readiness to put down civil disturbances, help out in cases of earthquakes, floods, or to bear the brunt of an enemy attack. Even so, their leaders are not warlords in the actual sense, because they have no authority over the general populace, except by order of the governor.

Following the collapse of every civilization, warlords have sprung up to consolidate the territory they inhabited and to fend off neighboring warlords who wanted more. When our world system dies, Feudalism will again rise to replace the destroyed or critically weakened central governments.

Upon the collapse of our civilization, due to war, economic blowout, an overload of degenerate dependents, or a combination of several factors, each region will be on its own. Aside from the big cities, which will perish in a burst of rioting, burning and plague, only the towns will be worth defending and so what I call warlords will not only be inevitable, but necessary.

It might be commonly supposed that a modern warlord would be the district military commander. But military people are not qualified to administer local governments serving their national populations. They might be used to head the local National Guard and serve in a purely defensive capacity.

Their main function would be to fend off bands of refugees from the cities. Such refugees would be plentiful, desperate and useless to the local economy. Purely military units would be necessary to reroute them around the town and escort them out of the country, or slaughter them if such had to be done. After the initial fighting off of outsiders, the military types could be assimilated into the population, since they are used to discipline and could pitch into any community endeavor.

You might consider the County Sheriff as the likeliest candidate for warlord, but he would not qualify. First, he is an elected official. As such, he is usually corrupt and in any case would not be adequate to administer to the needs of the towns under his jurisdiction. His staff might be excellent, but they are mainly

involved in policing the outlying districts and are not familiar enough with the workings of the towns to administer.

Forget the mayor. Another politician, he is a dingbat by nature, usually senile, and so crooked he needs his own accountant to keep him from cheating himself.

In fact, any elected official should be automatically written off as a choice for warlord. Politicians have no other goals in life but to get and keep a place at the public trough. Therefore, they are natural parasites and are incapable of any gainful or useful employment. This is partly because their training consists mainly in appealing to the lowest common denominators in their constituency. In other words, they make their appeals to the average. As you well know, the average voter is a grasping ignoramus who believes the world owes him a living. So successful politicians are skillful only in telling the voters what most of them want to hear. Consequently, the most incompetent and unscrupulous get elected.

I'm sure you've listened to President Carter. As aimless and moronic as is his political performance, he can give an off-the-cuff speech which projects hope to the hopeless and intelligence to the pseudo-intellectuals. This shows political refinement but such is the opposite of true qualifications for effective leadership.

A local politician is so clumsy and obvious that he sounds like Captain Kangaroo addressing the residents of Sesame Street. The congressman representing my district is a dumbbell but has turned political degeneracy into an art form.

I know these things because I live in Eureka. Eurekaans are barely conscious, a fourth of them on welfare and many of the rest working on Federally subsidized projects. You can easily imagine the level of ethics and competency of our mayor, D.A., sheriff and city council. So politicians are out as warlords.

In the more extreme category, are militant political groups and outlaw bikers. The political militants would be the first to be wiped out by the local militia. Many political militants fantasize that when the government collapses, the people will clamor for their bizarre solutions.

As an ex-right wing fanatic, I realize my old comrades and their counterparts on the left would be lucky to be left alive in any community they tried to take over.

Several readers have expressed concern that I am advocating rule by people like those in WHEELS OF RAGE. Actually, WHEELS was a satire on bikers in general. Its characters were composites of cronies I used to run around with. Even the best of bikers would be incompetent to be warlords. It's true that their kind became warlords during the Middle Ages. But then, as now, they were thugs. The thugs of the Middle Ages simply enslaved the populace. There was little or no progress under their rule and only when power was wrested from them was civilization allowed to mature.

Bands of bikers might effectively protect communal groups from similar bandits. But to allow them any official authority over such a group would be disastrous.

The best choice for warlord would be your local chief of police. In most cases, he is well trained, efficient, conscientious, courageous and honest. He generally knows more about the community than any other man in town. He is also mature enough to establish martial law in the best interests of the majority of the population.

He could be trusted to appoint the people best able to bring the townsfolk through the crisis. Furthermore, he would be the most

likely to step down when order was established and delegate authority to those professional people of merit who could run the town without coercion.

Only the police chief could justly implement the harsh measures a warlord would have to impose on the populace. Not caring to remain warlord, as would a politician or military officer, the police chief could establish internal and external security, regardless of criticism.

Like a surgeon cutting out cancer, a police chief could objectively eliminate the local parasites. A politician could never kill a degenerate whom he would later depend upon for votes.

Since austerity would be a fact of life for some time, the local parasites would have to be destroyed. This would entail rounding up all habitual criminals, pimps and their whores, sex offenders, long-term able-bodied welfare recipients, winos and drug addicts, taking them out to the edge of town and killing them.

There would be no practical reason for letting them survive. To enslave them would mean appointing guards with better uses to the community. To turn them loose would only be to inflict the vermin on decent people in other towns.

If this seems harsh, consider; the collapse of world civilization will bring about such death and suffering that eliminating a town's criminals and assorted parasitical trash will be easy. Especially when you consider that the survival of the good people of the town will be accomplished only through great hardship and austerity enough without the town's predators and social refuse.

The next task of the warlord would be a touchy one indeed. This would be the elimination of the town's hopelessly retarded, mentally incompetent, terminally ill and dependent aged. They will not survive anyway, and prolonging their lives would be not only a waste of precious resources, but would be an actual cruelty. Such an unwelcome task would have to be delegated to the town's most respected physicians, who would give injections to their hopeless cases.

Lest parents and relatives protest on behalf of their loved ones, they would have the final decision. In such cases, those closest to the useless would be given sleepy-by pills by the doctors to be administered when their misplaced altruism was overcome by the reality of the situation.

The warlord's only responsibility in the elimination of the physically and mentally hopeless, aside from authorizing the program, would be to see that no food or medicines out of the common store would be given to the hopeless. If relatives insisted on preserving such blighted dependents, they must do so out of their own rations.

In the event of a war or upon the general recognition of the permanent collapse of civilization, the populace would panic. The warlord's first duty would be to station armed personnel in stores holding food, medicines, tools, weapons, and anything the community would need to survive.

This does not mean the contents of the stores would be confiscated. Personal property is more than a right. It's a necessity. The store owner knows his inventory and how best to distribute it. Since he had the initiative to accumulate the supplies, he would most likely be able to get more, if possible. For these reasons, he must be left in proprietorship. If he is alienated by having his stock confiscated, he will be unlikely to cooperate in making or securing more supplies.

Rather than confiscating the stock, it might prove practical

to remove it to a common building more easily defended but with the inventory under the owner's continued proprietorship. In this way, for instance, all the contents of all the pharmacies could be removed to a common building and the respective owners could then cooperate in rationing the drugs and medicines, taking in exchange barter goods or whatever served as currency during the emergency.

Without such a system, stores would be looted of their most attractive contents. The less attractive wares, and possibly the most useful, would be trampled and destroyed.

After the worthless and hopeless members of the town were disposed of and the stores, utilities and other town necessities were secured, an individual census should be taken. Every householder should declare all his belongings. Again, private property rights must be respected, especially among those who have stocked up in anticipation of the collapse.

The Survivalists will be the most important people in the region and consequently, the most supportive of the warlord. Their surplus might also be stored in common warehouses. But they must not be confiscated and distributed for the "public good".

The only commodities which should be distributed to the general populace should be food from the supermarkets. The perishables will have to be distributed immediately, but with I.O.U.'s given to the proprietor by the warlord. The warlord will, in turn, collect I.O.U.'s from the recipients, to be paid for with work on public projects, especially agriculture.

Since the majority of the town's food supply is brought in from outlying areas, food will be critical. The current supply must be strictly rationed as no new stock will be brought in. The warlord must appoint agriculturists to supervise the cultivation of all arable land in the area. Even so, the survivalist with a year's supply of food must be allowed to keep it. In turn, he will not draw on the communal food supply except by trading his surplus for food items he lacks.

Every citizen should be required to submit a list of his possessions; food, tools, weapons, etc. Again, nothing must be confiscated, but aside from food, surplus tools, weapons, etc., should be freely loaned for the common good.

There is an interesting incident on page 481 of LUCIFER'S HAMMER, by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle. It tells of a farmer who had far more than he could use and didn't report it. He also took the help of those around him without meaning to help them in return. They took everything he had and drove him out. He took his wife and kids out and was probably eaten by the roving cannibals. He deserved it.

So a warlord must be an administrator, judge, fighter, tactician and a sincere protector of his charges. The idea of a warlord being a tyrant is absurd in America. There will be enough killing to last everyone a lifetime without the warlord turning on his own. That's why only the most responsible and able should become warlords.

The new warlords will save the culture, if anyone can. Only the local police chiefs qualify in all areas of such a responsibility. Only the police chief can properly choose townsmen to be deputized to help defend the region. And he can well realize that his deputies will eliminate him if he turns on the people.

Supporting your local police is not simply a slogan. There will come a time, and soon, when your local police chief might save you and everything you hold dear.