

Warning Signs of Anarchy - Do You See it Coming?

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The word “anarchy” dredges up images of third-world countries, overrun by rival warlords battling for control. Yet anarchy can mean a number of different things. By definition, civil war is a form of anarchy; because any society in anarchy is one in which the government has lost control. It can manifest in lawlessness of many types, even without a total collapse of the government.

For governments to function, they must be able to control the society. Whether this is through [fear tactics](#) and bullying or through a just system of laws and authority, the government must be able to predict what the members of society are going to do, as well as direct their energies into productive directions.

To the degree that they lose that ability, anarchy has set in.

The American Revolution was a time of anarchy. Our brave forefathers broke off from British rule and established what later became the United States of America. Britain reacted to this by sending military units to put down the rebellion. For a time, neither side had full control, leaving the people to govern themselves until the revolutionaries won their freedom.

While these sort of revolutions always seem to take us by surprise, there are signs that they are coming, just as there are signs that the government is losing control.

How Do You Know When it Starts?

When we see a number of these signs happening at the same time, we can be sure that a country is on the road to anarchy, even though they might not be on the brink of revolution or of a complete breakdown of society.

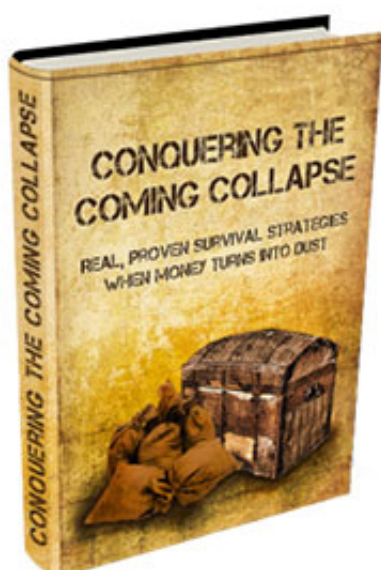
- Supply shortages – When people have a hard time getting the things that they need for day-to-day survival, they are likely to react in anger and violence. This happened in the Argentinean financial collapse, with hundreds of thousands of people turning out into the streets in protest. Many of those protests turned violent.
- Increased crime rates – One of the principal purposes of government is to protect the people. This is manifested through the various police departments and court system; apprehending, trying and incarcerating criminals that threaten society. When the government can't deal effectively with these criminals, it encourages others to join their ranks.
- High unemployment and poverty – People who are fat and happy are not anywhere near as likely to rise up in revolt as those who are hungry and angry. When a government can't create an environment which provides financial and material security to people, their anger spills forth in acts of defiance and lawlessness.
- Government ignores citizen's wishes – When a government stops paying attention to the wants and needs of their citizens, the people begin to distance themselves from the government; “divorcing” themselves from it. It is easy to rebel against a government that you don't feel is yours or that you feel doesn't care about your needs.
- Financial instability – The financial climate of a country greatly affects people's ability to take care of their basic needs and those of their families. A government which doesn't provide an atmosphere of financial security is ignoring the people's most basic needs.

- Class and racial warfare – When a society becomes divided, people are more likely to turn against one another. This can turn to low-level warfare between different races or classes of people. Left long enough, it can lead to genocide.
- Police brutality – Police are always outnumbered by citizens. When police feel threatened by the citizens that they are sworn to protect, they often turn respond with aggressiveness and violence. Police can only control the people when the vast majority of people are not involved in any social unrest. When the police are outnumbered by dissidents, they have to turn to more violent means of control, which can easily spark retaliation from citizens.
- Lack of confidence in elected leaders – While there are always dissidents who are opposed to the elected leaders, when the vast majority of society loses confidence in them, they stop listening and stop obeying.
- Lack of government funding – If the government does such a bad job of managing the economy that government revenues start to shrink, it can cause government services to be curtailed. Typically politicians will react to this by increasing taxes, especially on the middle class. Eventually, they reach the point where people find ways to stop paying taxes, further reducing government revenue.
- The law stops having meaning – When the government stops obeying the law, it sends a message to the people that they too can stop obeying the law. Without the law to protect us, we are only a step away from anarchy.
- A major disaster – Any major disaster can bring on anarchy in a moment; it doesn't matter if it is a man-made or natural disaster. Plagues have been known to bring it on.

Anarchy doesn't necessarily start at a particular point in time. Often, a society slides into anarchy as government gradually loses control. The government might technically be in place and operating, but they are ignored by the vast majority of the population. As this increases and government influence decreases, others step in and try to take control.

While any one of these things can be a harbinger of anarchy, the greatest danger is when you see a combination of them working together. The more signs off of this page that are going on at the same time, the closer a society is to falling into anarchy.

If you have seen any of those signs advancing in our society, speak up you mind using the comment form below!



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