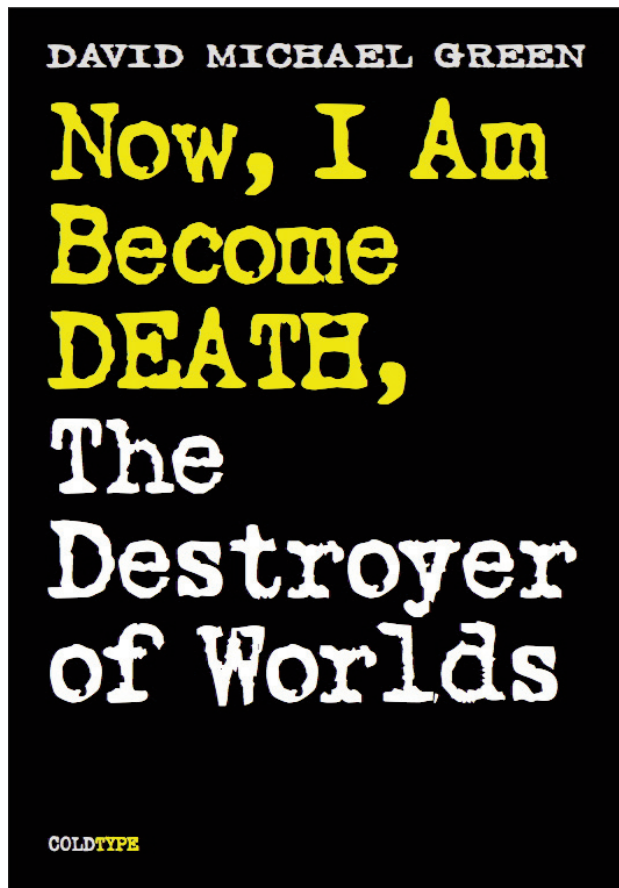


DAVID MICHAEL GREEN

Now, I Am
Become
DEATH,

The
Destroyer
of Worlds

COLDTYPE



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More of his work can be found at his website, <http://www.regressiveantidote.net>.

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ColdType

WRITING WORTH READING FROM AROUND THE WORLD
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The destructive force of Hurricane Bush continues to roll across the countryside, leaving in its wake devastation worthy of a Cormac McCarthy novel. And still, a third of all Americans think this guy is doing well in his job. What's up with these people? Are they learned students of philosophy who crave the nihilism of their intellectual hero, Friedrich Nietzsche? Are they a secret army of Charles Lindbergh clones, trained to believe that fascism is pretty good stuff? Was Joseph McCarthy even more right than he knew, after all, and America is actually riddled with a hundred million spies devoted to its destruction?

Who knows. What is clear is that the literal and figurative stacks of bodies continue to pile up unabated. At this rate it is no small question as to who will be left around to bury the dead once the killing stops.

We do know that it won't be Tony Blair, however. He joins a long list of fools and other kinds of victims of George Bush's politics of global destruction, a machine so effective that 'scorched earth' has become 'scorched Earth', and now effectively ceases to function as a metaphor. (Thus, in addition to everything else he's done, Bush has given pundits everywhere (another) reason to hate him.)

Blair is in the first category of fool. Hardly an innocent, he bet everything on Bush's insane Mesopotamian adventure. How odd. Blair is not some Arkansas rube whose preacher got a few bucks from the GOP and convinced the congregants to vote for this great man of god. He is not even an average American, too busy to think enough about politics to penetrate a wall of Madison Avenue produced thirty-second spots designed precisely to prevent any such independent thought.

No, Blair got to see the cowboy himself, up close and personal. He got to take the measure of the man in ways you and I never will (and yet we all figured him out just fine, didn't we?). And then they sat down and got to business. Discussing Blair's ignominious departure, conservative columnist David Brooks did the only thing the right ever has been able to do in order to sell their ideas, even as those policies have now long been imploding before our very eyes. He lied. He wrote that the conventional wisdom on Blair – a guy full of promise and good intentions who tossed it all on a bad, but well-meaning, bet – was wrong. I guess Brooks never read the Downing Street Memos, though. When,

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in those documents, the curtain of deception (including Blair's own '45 minutes' to Domsday farce) is parted, there stand the wizards, naked for all to see. And what we see is them acknowledging that their case for WMD is weak, that it is a ruse designed to sell a policy already decided upon, that the whole purpose of calling for UN inspections is so Saddam would reject them and provide a pretext for war, and that no plans whatsoever exist for what to do during the post-war occupation of Iraq.

It gets worse, too, but we're not allowed to know (yet). Last week two Brits were sentenced to jail for trying to leak a memo detailing more Bush-Blair conversations, these from 2004, as the wheels were even then every day coming off the wagon of their little Iraqi project. Unfortunately, we don't get to know what was in the document, but it was said by one person familiar with its contents to show beyond a doubt that George W. Bush is a "madman". So, no, actually, I don't feel the least bit sorry for Blair, who – better than almost anybody on either side of the Atlantic – knew the truth about Bush's character and conspired with him to lie to the entire world to facilitate a war of aggression. Given the resulting carnage, I'd say Blair is getting off real cheap with simply a ruined career and a failing grade in the history books. If there was any justice in the world, he would instead spend the rest of his life experiencing the misery he has brought to millions of other lives by casting his lot with the likes of George Bush in Iraq.

Ditto to the other world leaders, as well, who are probably less culpable than Blair, but only slightly so, many of whom have already felt the wrath of their angry publics. To date, elections in such strongly American allied countries as Germany, Italy, Spain, South Korea and just about everywhere in Latin America have turned into referenda on the Bush administration, with the universal outcome being "No, thanks", over and over again. John Howard, what in the world are you doing still in office? Now even the House of Saud has gone public with its discontents. At this point, how much of a stretch would it be for the Israeli government to effectively say, "Hey, love you guys and your whole boom-boom act, and appreciate all you do for us, but this Iraq thing is really messing up the neighborhood, so we're gonna have to act like we don't know you for a while, okay?"

The same thing is happening domestically. Bush once said that he would stick with his policy in Iraq until only Laura and Barney remained by his side. If you believe the tabloids, one of those two is getting ready to bolt as soon as they leave the White House (hint: it's the one that walketh upon two legs), and the resulting fervent minority of two seems just about where we might ultimately be headed, and also not a bad explanation of why. You know that the only way Barney gets his plate of Alpo is by nodding his head when the Scary Guy tells him to. Some days, though, even a rattling empty belly seems preferable to the

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garbage you have to swallow in order to get your food ration.

So it is with members of Congress. If you're George Bush, you know that the Sun and Moon just fell on your head when Trent Lott starts making noises about 'needing to see progress' in Iraq in order to maintain his current booking on the Andrea Doria. Or maybe you would know that if you weren't George Bush. It's hard to say whether the delegation of Congressional Republican co-conspirators who recently paid a call on the White House got their message across or not. Between Blair's demise, the Saudi demurrals and the GOP's thumping, you gotta figure that if it was ever going to be done, that would do the trick.

Still, that remains a big if. Apart from the very real question of sanity, what is now happening is that the sick predators who chose this sociopath to be their standard-bearer are getting their own taste of what the rest of us have been subjected to these last six years while they were rolling about in their slop, reveling in their political good fortunes. Unable, by definition, to feel or care about the travails of others, Bush remains fixated on Bush. And that means staying in Iraq. It's crucial to leave it to the next president to 'lose' the war, so that Bush's butterfly-fragile ego does not have to go to the place where the cosmos proves definitively what his parents and his life experience have been insisting all along, but what he has desperately sought to avoid at all costs: He is a total loser, after all. A lifelong failure. A complete screw-up, blessed with a golden surname. What a price we've all paid, to save this man from himself.

I noticed, though, that the White House didn't turn the sixteen-inch guns of their battleship of personal destruction, the USS Karl Rove, on the GOP delegation from the Capitol, like they regularly have on those who previously made similar remarks, including Democrats, General Shinseki, Joseph Wilson and the entire nation of France. That could be an encouraging sign that the ugly reality is finally penetrating. On the other hand, it might simply mean that even Dick Cheney realizes that there is a limit to how absurd one can be, even when talking to the American public, and that dissing your own party leadership for being weak on a massively unpopular war when you're perched at twenty-eight percent is a maybe step too far. Maybe. You can bet they batted it around in Rove's office a few times. Of course, pretending to listen while appearing reasonable and actually having the war shut off on you are two different things, so we still don't know what the White House will do when their own people start defecting in large numbers to end the war.

And it is a question of when, not if. These GOP fools in Congress – once the very paragons of superciliousness and political savagery – are scrambling for their political lives, and it couldn't be happening to a more deserving lot. They now have two unpleasant alternatives to choose from as they ask the voters to keep their jobs in 2008. They can either admit they were wrong, or they can continue to be wrong. If that doesn't seem like a particularly fetching platform for securing victory in a political campaign, that's because it's not. This is a

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familiar dance, last seen during Watergate. One by one the Republicans abandon their president, as the violations of the Constitution, foreign countries, the American people and the truth are revealed, also one by one.

This president is already radioactive. Given the nature of Cheneyism, the fact that their depredations have gone completely unexamined by Congress for six years, the trajectory of an already hated war, and the president's current standing already hovering down where sunlight rarely penetrates and the strangest creatures prowl the ocean floor, it is nearly inconceivable that things will get better for these members of Congress between now and November 2008. The good news is that their own track records and the 'R' following their names will make it nearly impossible for most of these bottom-feeders to escape their well-deserved fates, even if the double-foot-shooting Democrats could somehow manage to put John Kerry on the ballot in every congressional district across America.

The even better news is that this is likely to be a more powerful effect than was Watergate. The GOP is in free fall, but with almost nowhere to go. North of Hattiesburg, at least, the public despises Republicans and a whole generation of young people have turned against the party, likely for life. It is only fitting that the reign of destruction wrought by this president should come back to destroy the very petri dish in which this virulent cancer was incubated. But now what? The party no longer has any real reason to exist, and virtually no ideological alternatives among its leadership. Will it become the new party of clean politics, small government, fiscal responsibility and foreign policy prudence, in loyal and genteel opposition to the Democrats? Let's just say that would be a bit of a hard sell given past performance. Will it stand for the little guys against all the malevolent corporate predators out there trying to rip them off? Um, that's a bit problematic, since those actors – what are described in polite society as 'campaign contributors' – happen to be the very owners of the party. Will Olympia Snowe inherit the mantle of Newt Gingrich, rally the other three 'moderates' still left in the GOP, and bring them back from the edge of extinction? I don't think so.

If you thought the first Republican presidential debate this season was a joke (with all those white men on stage, I was just waiting for someone to get it over with and burn a cross already), imagine what their convention will be like more than a year from now. Already they were pretending never to have heard of a certain Republican who just happens to be in the White House and just happens to have been the most significant political figure of our time. (Significant with respect to impact either for good or bad, that is, in the same way that Time once made Adolf Hitler its Man of the Year. This week's Harper's cover story is less ambiguous: "Undoing Bush: How to Repair Eight Years of Sabotage, Bungling and Neglect" – though that title still doesn't get to the truly

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worst aspects of this administration). Anyhow, instead of Bush, at the debate it was all Reagan, all the time (which, of course, means Reagan The Movie, not the real thing). At the convention in Saint Paul next September, something tells me they're going to forego the glossy Hollywood video tribute to Bush that has become de rigeur at the end of an eight-year presidency. I'm wondering if they'll even let the guy show up. I'm wondering if they'll be trying so hard to distance themselves from him that confused viewers might think Bill Clinton is still in office, and still having a bit too much fun down there under the desk.

You can, in short, certainly add the GOP to the list of losers destroyed by this one-man wrecking machine, this force of nature, this human tsunami leveling everything in sight. Nowadays, as I survey the wreckage, I am reminded of nothing so much as Robert Oppenheimer's initial thoughts as he witnessed the birth of his creation. When that first atomic bomb exploded in the New Mexico desert that day in 1945, Oppenheimer recalled the words from the Hindu holy book, the Bhagavad Gita: "Now, I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds". I am finally coming to believe in Bush's whole rap about there being evil in the world, after all. It just isn't found quite where he might have guessed.

Just ask the Iraqis, whose country George Bush might as well have nuked for all the chaos, death and destruction he's caused. There are probably a million Iraqis now dead to serve the purposes of one man's lust for personal validation, which would make him a very big human hydrogen bomb, indeed, considering that Little Boy took out 'only' 140,000 at Hiroshima, by comparison. I guess it's fair to say that you could add Iraq to George's list of losers. And yet there we remain, even after the Iraqi parliament just voted for us to leave. That sounds a lot like democracy to me. Seems they've finally located that weapon of mass destruction that Bush was famously searching for under his desk. It was quite nearby, after all.

And then there's the American military, which is now broken and spent, and over 3,400 smaller in number than it once was, in addition to the wreckage of ten or twenty thousand gravely injured. And then, too, there are (or were) the good folks of places like the Gulf Coast or Greenburg, Kansas, who really could have used the help of the National Guard and its equipment, but, unfortunately, it seems to have had a more pressing engagement at the moment than saving American lives. Gotta keep our priorities straight, you know.

Let's also not forget the taxpayers who will be footing the bill for decades to come for what has been called the biggest foreign policy disaster in American history. If the war and all its fallout ultimately cost a trillion dollars (according to the most reliable estimate, it could be twice that amount), each American taxpayer will own better than a \$7,000 chunk of that. That's before interest on the loans used to finance the war is added in, probably doubling the figure. So, what do you have to show for your fifteen or thirty thousand bucks? A shiny new car? A college education? Or a whole world that hates you because you finance the

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invasion of countries that pose not the least threat to you? When you put it that way, it almost seems like a bargain. No doubt Iraq has been the most efficient use of money in the entire history of American public diplomacy. With 6.5 billion people on the planet, I calculate that we're only spending about \$154 per global citizen to engender the hatred of all of them. This is clearly the most successful project of the entire Bush administration. Perhaps we ought to double-down on this investment, and see if we can't alienate (get it?!) the entire galaxy!

The problem with fighting the wrong war somewhere is that you don't have anything left over to fight the right war somewhere else, so I guess we better add American security to the list of George W. (M. D.) Bush's casualties. If I hadn't already long ago lost my capacity to be shocked at the nature of political discourse in this country, I would be floored by the Republican presidential candidates who've joined Bush in asserting that getting Osama bin Laden is really no big priority. Wait, isn't this the guy who they told us did 9/11? Ah, but getting Saddam – who never attacked us and never even threatened to – well, now, that was crucial. Said the White Rabbit. To the Mad Hatter. At the tea party. With almost every bit of our land force capabilities tied down in Iraq, and with troop tours being extended to cover the breach, we're staring here at some bad news no matter which side of the looking glass you happen to be on. God help us if Mexico should ever decide it's payback time.

Which reminds us of yet another loser sacrificed on the altar of the Boy King's fragile ego, namely, American prestige and influence in the world. I generally find that people don't like it when you go off and invade foreign countries, especially when you base your justification for doing so on transparently fraudulent pretexts. People are just fussy that way, I guess. Then, when you set up gulags in the name of democracy (and do so following a century of toppling other people's democracies), and proceed to rip-up international law so you can torture people, it doesn't go over real well. But if you really want to engender some full-blown ridicule and revulsion, you need to fight a bogus war on terrorism, whilst harboring an admitted terrorist from extradition to the scene of his crime. Oh, and for the full effect, be sure to offer your (completely fabricated) fear that this terrorist would be tortured if extradited as your excuse for not returning him, all while you are kidnapping, torturing and murdering people, and humiliating entire cultures throughout the world in the name of fighting terrorism. (Who says they forgot the irony gene when designing Homo Americanus? Huh?) No, people don't like that. Just fussy that way.

In any case, the loss of American influence in the world is not entirely a bad thing. (Though the blowback in coming decades from creating so many angry friends and relatives of mangled, smoking piles of flesh that used to be human beings will be, and already is, according to our own intelligence agencies). While Norte Americanos haven't necessarily noticed their waning influence in the world, I can assure that Latin Americans have. After two centuries of being ground under the heel of the gringo's boot, they're partying with abandon now that

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they're finally free. Hugo Chávez never misses an opportunity to stand ten feet away, haunting and taunting the ferocious dog on the eight foot chain. So, hey, maybe this Iraq thing wasn't so bad after all, if it means that we can no longer invade Venezuela. Or Cuba. Or Bolivia. Or Nicaragua. Or Brazil. Or... Well, pretty much all those countries down there have chosen governments that blow off Washington's feeble snarl. Other than Mexico (formerly known as 'our backyard'), that is, where the folks who brought you Florida 2000 sent down and recreated their gift to democracy last year.

But I think we should strive to avoid being all doom and gloom here. There are winners, too, as a product of Bushism, and maybe it's time to accentuate the positive a little, eh? Take Osama, for example. He could be dead, but he's not! That's positive, right? I mean, as long as he's not a terrorist, or anything. As long as he's not plotting any attacks on America, or such. You know, why not let him be? And how about Iran? They seem like nice enough blokes over there, and they've really had a string of bad luck ever since 1953, when some foreign evildoers demolished their democracy by toppling the government in a violent coup in order to maintain the interests of foreign oil companies. You know, the same folks who also installed the dictatorial Shah and his hated secret police, the Savak (which then gave birth to the Ayatollah Khomeini and his equally repressive theocracy). You know, the same folks who gave weapons, intelligence and encouragement to Saddam Hussein, the "madman" who was "another Hitler", so that he could invade Iran and launch the ugliest war since World War II. Who could do such things? Certainly we never would, since we're both pro-democracy and anti-evildoer.

Given that very bumpy ride, I guess it's probably a good thing that Iran has come out the big winner from the Bush presidency. Maybe it's okay that they now rule Iraq as well as their own country. Maybe it's not so bad that we have financed their nuclear program with the doubling of oil prices that Mr. Bush's policies have facilitated. So what if they do love to chant "Death to America" over there, and refer to us as "The Great Satan". Probably they don't really mean it. Chances are, that nuke is intended for use against New Guinea, not New York. As long as we don't antagonize them with rattled sabers or pejoratives like "axis of evil", we should be okay.

Of course, the biggest winners of all are the nice people in the Chinese government. No, they don't bother with democracy, and their human rights record is atrocious. You might think that means we're fixin' to invade them, but I guess the smart people in the Bush administration have figured out that it would be better to export all our jobs to them instead. Must be a secret weapon of some sort, no doubt. Meanwhile, there they sit, like the good inscrutable Asians they are, slowly and quietly unfurling their plot to replace the US as the world's next hegemon. But what's the big deal about that? Who cares if we go from being

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the world's greatest power to a humiliated second-rate has-been? It's worked out okay for the French, hasn't it? God knows we've confused Mr. Hu, though, who undoubtedly is also asking what and why, as we frenetically expedite the process of our own demise. He's probably wondering if Bush isn't some kinda gift from Putin, who, in his fury at America thought about poisoning the entire country with polonium 210, but decided to arrange for the Bush presidency instead.

Heck of tally sheet, isn't it? The list of losers from the Great American Train Wreck of the Twenty-First Century include our allies, our security, our future security, our friends, our influence, our troops, our money, our prestige and our national unity. Heading the list of winners is Osama bin Laden, the Iranian mullahs, and our future rivals in China. In a way, even Saddam Hussein came out ahead, despite that he's not around to enjoy it.

There are a couple of other losers I forgot to mention, as well. Their names are Bush and Cheney. Yeah, it's been a great ride – Air Force One, lots of Moonie-like adoration, great food, etc. – and yeah, they'll probably make even more money than they've already got once it's over. (Though something tells me that the ghost-written memoir of a hated illiterate isn't exactly gonna move a lot of product on Amazon.) But they might find that their travel opportunities are somewhat limited, much like those of Henry Kissinger. And they might even find, if the right documents manage to surface, what the inside of a jail cell looks like. Or worse. I sure as hell wouldn't want to be on the lam from the enraged families of 3,400 dead troops when it's proven definitively that the whole war was a complete sham. (Of course, such documents already did surface with the publication of the Downing Street Memos, only to be ignored, but that was a different time. I doubt seriously that we've heard the last on those.)

So down they go, one by one, leaving us to wonder if perhaps their silly domino theory wasn't right after all. Just take out Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and substitute regressivism, the GOP and Bush, and the damn thing actually works!

Hey, finally I've found a crackpot right-wing idea I can get behind!



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