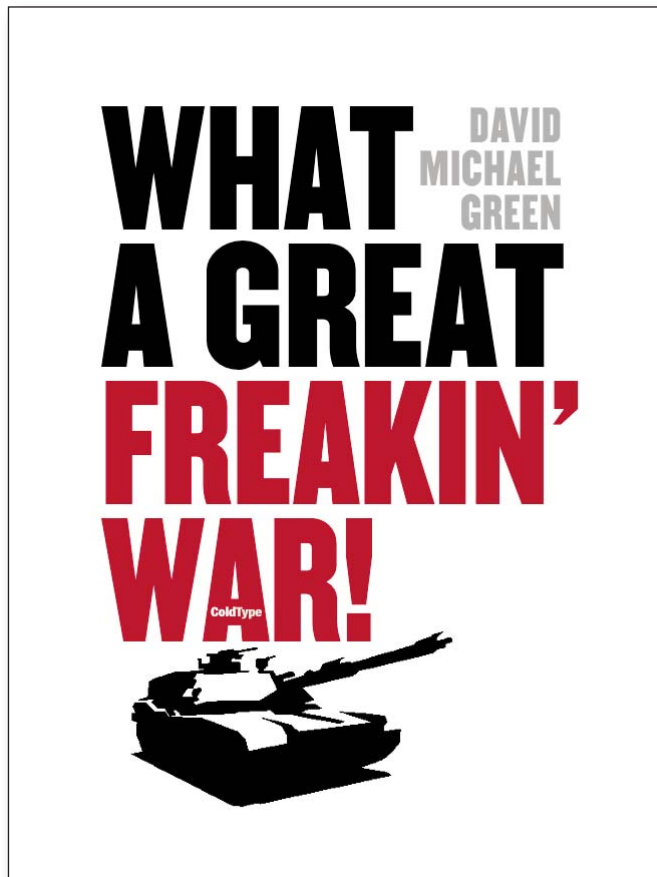


WHAT **DAVID**
A GREAT **MICHAEL**
FREAKIN' **GREEN**
WAR!

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David Michael Green is a professor of political science at Hofstra University in New York. He is delighted to receive readers' reactions to his articles (mailto:dmg@regressiveantidote.net), but regrets that time constraints do not always allow him to respond.

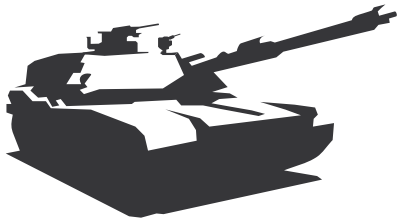
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WHAT A GREAT FREAKIN' WAR . . . DAVID MICHAEL GREEN



What a ding-dong I am! For months – nay, years! – I’ve been ranting about how screwed up the war in Iraq has been, and how disastrous have been its consequences. What a fool I’ve been! In reality, it’s actually turned out pretty great. That’s what I learned when I read William Kristol’s recent *New York Times* piece, “The Democrats’ Fairy Tale”. In a stroke of thoughtfulness, generosity and uncanny prescience, the Times was kind enough recently to hire Kristol to write a regular column for their op-ed page. I guess that’s because Ariel Sharon was unavailable and David Duke was on vacation.

And bless his little heart, Kristol knows a thing or two about a thing or two. Heck, he’s the one who got us into Iraq in the first place! He’s been telling us for a long time what a cool thing it would be to knock over that tin-pot Saddam Hussein crank, and damned if he didn’t convince the president to do it, despite Bush’s decades of foreign policy experience.

But it’s been a rough couple of years for Ol’ Bill, ‘cause the whole damn country went into some sort of narcoleptic, apoplectic, pathogenic tizzy about the war, crying fickle and foul at every turn and seeming like all everyone wanted was to end the darned thing. Imagine that. What a bunch of whiney little self-interested twits, squealing like a continent full of Europeans, and utterly failing to see the great wisdom of Young William’s Grand Adventure In Mesopotamia. It’s really quite nauseating, isn’t it?

In his article, Kristol really rips the Democrats, and don’t they ever deserve it. Now that Iraq appears to be marginally more peaceful than it was last year at this time, Kristol is angry because, as he puts it: “It’s apparently impermissible for leading Democrats to acknowledge – let alone celebrate – progress in Iraq”.

Bill is angry because the Democrats (and the public – but, oddly, he doesn’t mention that part) still want to end the war – even though it’s been a huge success! They should “celebrate” it, instead! Fortunately, he is clever enough to suss out the real reason for this childish intransigence. It’s not, as Hillary put it, because the Iraqis know the Democrats will shut off the supply valve of endless wasted dollars and

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soon-to-be casualties headed to Baghdad. As Kristol notes, “That is truly a fairy tale. And it is driven by a refusal to admit real success because that success has been achieved under the leadership of ... George W. Bush. The horror!”

I must admit I've suffered from some of the same confusion as the Dumb Dems, whom I think we can all agree are simply hopelessly naive pacifists intent on allowing our country to be taken over by Very Bad People (of less than fully white complexion) who mean us harm. You know the type I mean, like George McGovern, who flew all those bombing missions during World War II while Little Bush, Cheney, Ashcroft, Kristol and the rest fought ... valiantly ... in ... Viet ... oh, never mind. Anyhow, that hopeless and dangerous idealism is why, just one year before the Iraq war, every single Democrat in the Congress opposed the invasion of Afghanistan except for ... well, except for ... every single Democrat in Congress other than one. Okay, never mind on that one too.

Look, let's get down to brass tacks here. Kristol just gets it. The rest of us don't. He realizes that in the grand scheme of things – “World War IV” as his pappy likes to call it – what's important is not the big picture, but the very narrowest.

You may think, for example, that promulgating egregious lies in order to shove your way into an Iraq war that no one else wants is stupid and counterproductive, damaging the credibility and interests of the United States, and probably accounting for the lack of allied support in a more credible war in Afghanistan. But Bill Kristol knows better.

You may think that fighting a war that massively drains military, diplomatic and financial resources away from the real enemies of the country in order to pursue a pet project that has nothing to do with those genuine threats would be idiotic and suicidal. But that's 'cause you're not as smart as William Kristol.

You might believe that it was a ludicrous waste of blood and treasure to kill 4,000 Americans and one million Iraqis, while borrowing and spending a trillion bucks (fast going up to two) in order to invade a country that had neither attacked us nor threatened us. And that doing so was an extremely poor choice of resource allocation, especially when we have tens of millions of children doing without healthcare in this country. But if you were a clever neoconservative like Bill Kristol you'd know better.

You might think that wrecking our military and compromising American security over a non-problem – indeed, a problem that people like Bushes and Cheneys and Rumsfelds and Reagans once very much created and encouraged – would be a stupid choice of priorities. But that's only because you don't have the foreign policy insight of someone like Bill Kristol.

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And let me guess – I bet you also think that launching a war that brings chaos to a vital and volatile area, and that massively increases the power of an Iran run by radical theocrats was a really, really dumb idea. But if you were Bill Kristol you'd realize that all we need is a third war against an Islamic country, and we can clean up the whole mess all at once!

Or maybe you're like all those American intelligence agencies, who collectively reported last year that the Iraq war was actually creating anti-American terrorists rather than eradicating them. But if you were as smart as Mr. Bill and his Kristol Ball, you'd know that they're all just a bunch of long-haired and bearded blame-America-first left-wing Berkeley rejects running covert ops for the CIA, NSA and other intelligence agencies. Of course they're going to diss the war! It's going well, and those unpatriotic spooks can't stand that because they hate America!

Maybe you're angry because you think the same American soldiers whom people like George W. Bush are always hiding behind should actually have adequate armor to fight the war they've been thrust into, rather than their families having to hold bake sales to buy it for them. And maybe you also think they should be treated a wee bit better than they have been at Walter Reed (and far beyond) when they come home wounded, or they have to fight harder than in Anbar to get the benefits owed to them out of the military. But what Bill Kristol knows is that you can't make an omelette without breaking some eggs! So lighten up on that whole concern-for-the-troops thing already. (Unless you're the president doing a photo-op, of course.)

Don't tell me you're chagrined at the idea that American forces may be in Iraq for another decade, or even for a full "generation". Probably that's just because you or someone you know might have to go fight there. People like Kristol never do, of course, so why should he worry?

Are you angry that well-connected cronies and corporations got rich off this war? That eight billion dollars in cash went completely missing in Iraq? That multi-billion dollar no-bid contracts got paid out for jobs never done? That American soldiers worked and bled and died for peanuts alongside mercenaries making four times as much salary? That we will be paying for this war in interest on loans and expensive treatment of the wounded for generations to come? Yeah? Well Bill Kristol thinks you should get your priorities straight!

Have you somehow come to the conclusion that turning one-fifth of Iraq's 25 million people into either corpses or refugees hasn't exactly been a great liberating service to that country? You know, sorta like when we told them to rise up but then stood by and watched Saddam mow them down. Or when we turned a blind eye to Saddam's use of chemical weapons against his own people, and even protected

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him from condemnation for those crimes at the UN? Bill Kristol thinks that's because you just don't know the true value of freedom and democracy. Oh, and you put too much emphasis on that whole not-getting-killed thing.

Are you one of those whiney liberals who believe that this war – whether one supported the idea of it originally or not – has been ridiculously mishandled from the beginning? That there were never enough troops sent in? That allowing rampant looting was stupid? That failing to have plans for the occupation of a country of 25 million people constitutes criminal negligence? That firing the Iraqi army was just as idiotic as sending thousands of armed and angry men home unemployed sounds like it would be? That purging the national government and infrastructure of all Baath Party members was a prescription for chaos? That allowing civil war between Sunni and Shiite was disastrous? Yeah, well, Bill Kristol knows better. He understands that what's really important is that the massive levels of violence and pandemonium of these last FIVE years (count 'em) are now possibly slightly lower than the outrageous levels they've long been at, and could conceivably stay that way.

Can't you see the small picture here? Kristol can. I guess that's why he has a *New York Times* column and you don't. I guess that's why the president listens to his advice and not yours.

Who could blame him for being angry and vituperative toward dangerously silly Democrats who don't see the peril facing our civilization?

Such quibblers! So what if the war was sold on completely fabricated lies, was supposed to be a cakewalk but has now lasted longer than World War II, has divided the country and made the world hate us, has squandered our (borrowed) resources and broken our military, has brought instability to a volatile and crucial region and allowed a real national antagonist to double its power, has diverted our resources from the still-uncaptured guy who supposedly attacked us on 9/11, has become a factory for producing anti-American terrorists, has wiped out over a million innocent people and turned more than four million into refugees? So what if this war has now supposedly been 'saved' by precisely the same strategy that was vehemently rejected by the same people in the beginning?

Let's keep our priorities straight here, people. All that really matters is that we've seen a possible slight improvement in levels of violence in Iraq over the last couple of months (all of which may be due to a host of possible factors, including that there aren't many people left alive to fight there anymore). Get it?

Some people think that burning down your neighbor's house and having your own catch fire as a result is a highly stupid and really criminal thing to do. What neocons like Bill Kristol understand, though – and what naive liberals will never get – is that

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what really matters is whether you can slightly diminish the rate at which the flames consume those dwellings, five years after starting the fire. That's what's genuinely important – not the ashes where the houses once stood.

If you understood that simple principle, you wouldn't be complaining about this war so much. Rather, you'd be "celebrating" how well it's going.

If you understood this logic, you'd have supported the war from the very beginning, as William Kristol did. (Which of course has nothing to do with his apparent defensiveness about it today, we can all rest assured.)

In fact, if you were as smart as Bill Kristol and the other fine folks who brought you the invasion of Iraq, you'd quit with all your smug complaints, once and for all.

And you'd realize what a great freakin' war this really is!



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