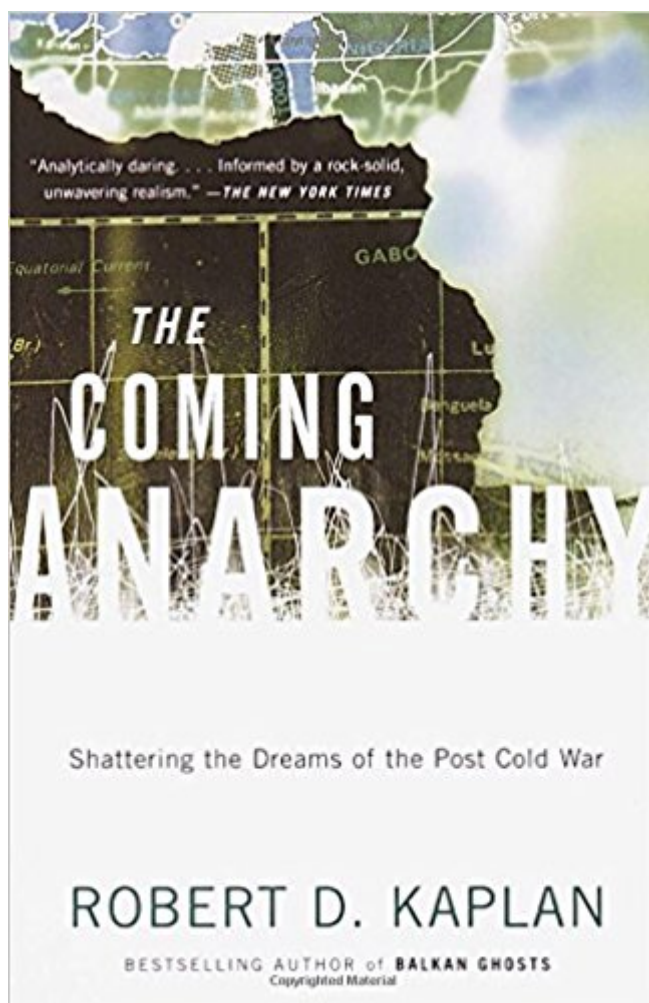


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# The Coming Anarchy: Shattering The Dreams Of The Post Cold War



## Synopsis

Robert Kaplan, bestselling author of *Balkan Ghosts*, offers up scrupulous, far-ranging insights on the world to come in a spirited, rousing, and provocative book that has earned a place at the top of the reading lists of the world's policy makers. The end of the Cold War has not ushered in the global peace and prosperity that many had anticipated. Volatile new democracies in Eastern Europe, fierce tribalism in Africa, civil war and ethnic violence in the Near East, and widespread famine and disease "not to mention the brutal rift developing as wealthy nations reap the benefits of seemingly boundless technology while other parts of the world slide into chaos" are among the issues Kaplan identifies as the most important for charting the future of geopolitics. Historical antecedents in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* and in the legacies of statesmen such as Henry Kissinger contribute to this bracingly prophetic framework for addressing the new global reality. Bold, erudite, and profoundly important, *The Coming Anarchy* is a compelling must-read by one of today's most penetrating writers and provocative minds.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Robert Kaplan warns of a "bifurcated world divided between societies like ours, producing goods and services that the rest of the world wants, and those mired in various forms of chaos." This is a familiar theme for previous Kaplan readers (*Balkan Ghosts*, *The Ends of the Earth*). For those unacquainted with Kaplan, however, *The Coming Anarchy* is a fine introduction to one of the most important voices on the future of society and international relations. Kaplan mixes the intense

reportage of a travel writer with the sharp wisdom of a foreign-policy expert to deliver what he calls "an unrelenting record of uncomfortable truths, of the kind that many of us implicitly acknowledge but will not publicly accept." The Coming Anarchy is also a disturbing book: Kaplan's vision of the future is a bleak one, full of ethnic conflict as the world falls away from a cold war that at least provided a kind of stability in even the shakiest of countries. That's gone now, of course, and Kaplan's descriptions of life and politics in Sierra Leone, Russia, India, and elsewhere are keenly troubling. Much of the book--but not all of it--has already seen print, mainly on the pages of The Atlantic Monthly and The Wall Street Journal. It is brief in length but not in importance. --John J. Miller

Lest anyone still maintain the illusion that the end of the Cold War ushered in an era of "good times," these nine provocative, thoughtful, and very speculative essays (most of which previously appeared in periodicals) should set the record straight. Here Kaplan (The End of the Earth; Balkan Ghosts), a contributing editor of the Atlantic Monthly, describes his Clockwork Orange-like vision of the world's future--in which societies are permeated with violence, crime remains unabated, and official corruption and anarchy run rampant. Using West Africa and Turkey as his primary examples, he argues that "environmental scarcity," ethnic strife, overcrowded living areas, and the changing nature of war will irreparably tear the social fabrics of societies all over the world--in places as far apart as India, Canada, South America, Yugoslavia, Africa, the Far East, the Middle East, and even the United States. Kaplan further suggests that democracy will not protect us from this apocalypse; indeed, he notes, it could even help cause it. His experiences as a journalist in the world's hot spots corroborate his pessimistic conclusions, and the clarity of his vision serves as a wake-up call. For most public and academic libraries.-Jack Forman, Mesa Coll. Lib., San Diego Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

That brought this book to mind. It seems that every day there is one or more killings, and sometimes they achieve a "spectacular" rating, meaning at least double digits, and that keeps the media's attention for a few days. For the West, a lot seems to have to do with the purported conflict with Islam. But a lot is also just disaffected and angry people who wrap themselves in the banner of religious conflict, and others that don't even bother. The media's coverage is rather formulaic, with pictures of the victims, and a sense of bafflement as to how this happens, yet again. Too many guns, in too many hands is definitely a major contributing factor, but pressure cookers, trucks, axes and knives are also used. Most

importantly, it was not always this way. Sure, I might have had drills in which I hide under my school desk to fend off a nuclear bomb from the Soviet Union in the 1950s, but I walked home from school safely, and the door to our house was always unlocked. I've read several other books by Kaplan, most recently his latest book, on Romania, entitled *In Europe's Shadow: Two Cold Wars and a Thirty-Year Journey Through Romania and Beyond*. He is well-traveled, and a thoughtful and often an original observer. Thus, I sought his insights into a major area of concern. This book is a collection of nine of Kaplan's essays, many of which had been published in *The Atlantic*. All were written before 9/11, an important consideration when noting his many prescient observations. No question in my mind, the title essay is the best. Kaplan never mentions global warming. Instead, he focuses on its major cause: an absolute rise in population in the world's poorest countries in the near future and how that interacts with soil depletion, ethnic-tribal divides, and so on to produce unrest. Provocatively, he posits an area that is on no one's hot spot tourist list: West Africa, as the world's future. And this is long before Ebola. He notes that in 1961 60% of Sierra Leone was primary rain forest, and by 1998, it is only 6%. He notes that in Abidjan, capital of the Cote d'Ivoire, armed guards will escort you from your restaurant to your car, which gives an eerie taste of what American cities might be like in the future. No question, Kaplan's views are Hobbesian, and the fear, via those already cited headlines, is that he just might be correct. He also introduced me to the writings of Martin van Creveld, an Israeli military historian, in particular his book *The Transformation of War: The Most Radical Reinterpretation of Armed Conflict Since Clausewitz*. The other eight essays, to a very large degree, were equally informative and provocative. Democracy? Well, it only works sometimes, and many have done quite well with only its facade, such as Singapore. Presciently, again, he wonders if it will last in America. If only the neocons who rushed to impose democracy on Iraq had read that one! In another essay, on the primacy of good intelligence in war, he concludes with the intelligence business is set for a golden age. Indeed, big bucks have been made in the field, yet Kaplan does not address why they STILL get it wrong so many times. Fittingly, for someone of a Hobbesian bent, there is a good essay on Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 1-6 (Everyman's Library), naturally the unabridged version. In another essay he hypes Conrad's *Nostromo*. Why is *Heart Of Darkness*: By Joseph Conrad - Illustrated so much more famous? It is considerably shorter! Ah, but did his essay on Kissinger, Metternich and Realism raise my ire, and BP by a few points. Kaplan is (mildly) critical of Henry, but urges the reader to understand his Munich, 1938 perspective. He lauds

Kissinger/Nixon for how quickly they pulled the troops out of Vietnam— with  
—quickly— being relative to one's perspective in an armchair in Washington, or  
a remote firebase in the Central Highlands. Chile gets only a passing mention. Timor, not at all.  
B-52 bombings of Hanoi and Cambodia— well, —you can't make an omelet  
without breaking a few eggshells. — And, most importantly, you need a —tough  
guy— persona when dealing with China and the Soviet Union. With my blood pressure back to  
normal, for the rating, I must balance the Kissinger essay against the other eight good ones, and the  
math yields 4-stars.

I lent this book to a friend, and it's okay that it went missing. I just bought it again. For those  
uninitiated in the prophecies of Kaplan, hold on to your shorts, because this full indictment of  
western civilization and his analysis of the direct relationship between the downfall of "AMERICA" to  
the anarchy of the undeveloped world is unflinching, mesmerizing and based in fact. Frightening,  
invigorating for the revolutionary reader, and altogether astute. A must-read for followers of politics  
and travelers. READ.

I knew the current worldwide situation reminded me of anarchy. It was all insightfully predicted and  
explained by Robert Kaplan. It also led me to investigate his other articles in The Atlantic and his  
web site for numerous other articles and books to enlighten us all on the local realities of a world  
undergoing a significant transition in the 21st Century. Highly recommended!

This is another book that has an OLD bookmark in it, 2nd January 2006; it was though a quick read.  
Scary but fast. As most of you know I like quotes, this book however has way too many. It mentions  
several books that I know of just have never read like Gibbon's Decline and Fall and Conrad's  
Nostromo that I would like to look into further. This book is close to 10 years old but seems very  
relevant to us today. I'm going to head over to the library now and see if they have any of his other  
books. "Of the world's hundred largest economies, 51 are not countries but corporations. While the  
200 largest corporations employ less than .0075 of the world's work force, they account for 28% of  
the world's economic activity. The 500 largest corporations account for 70% of world trade.  
Corporations are like the feudal domains that evolved into nation-states; they are nothing less than  
the vanguard of a new Darwinian organization of politics."

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