

2006

## Robert Kaplan: The Coming Anarchy Study Guide, 2001-2006

Steven Alan Samson

*Liberty University*, [ssamson@liberty.edu](mailto:ssamson@liberty.edu)

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### Recommended Citation

Samson, Steven Alan, "Robert Kaplan: The Coming Anarchy Study Guide, 2001-2006" (2006). *Faculty Publications and Presentations*. 100.

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# ROBERT KAPLAN: THE COMING ANARCHY

## STUDY GUIDE, 2001-2006

### Steven Alan Samson

## PREFACE

### Study Questions

1. What were the consequences of dismantling the Cold War security structures? [William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* depicted a Hobbesian "war of all against all" among English school boys stranded on a desert island – a departure from *Robinson Crusoe*, which itself was based on the experiences of Alexander Selkirk]. What new bifurcated world has arisen? In what novel ways is the world being divided? (xi-xiii)

### Review

realism vs. idealism                      Wilsonianism                      Ethiopian famine of 1984-1985  
dismantling of Cold War security structures

## I. THE COMING ANARCHY

### Study Questions

1. Describe the conditions under which the coup leaders of Sierra Leone were raised. What is life like in such West African cities as Freetown, Abidjan, and Lagos? What are some of the effects of the transition from rural communalism to life in the city? Why is crime more prevalent in the poor quarters of West Africa than in North Africa? What are some of the effects of overpopulation? (3-7)
2. Why are political maps in West Africa so deceptive? What is the military situation? What is required for functional sovereignty? What are some effects of deforestation? Identify the chief trends in West Africa. (7-9)
3. What made Abidjan the Paris of West Africa? What factors are making the Ivory Coast into a case study in Third World catastrophe? What makes travel through West Africa so complicated? Why is Nigerian hegemony over West Africa likely to occur? (9-14)
4. Why will France withdraw from its former colonies? Why is Nigeria likely to fracture? What does the author signify when he notes that the population belts are horizontal and the borders are vertical? What are some of the characteristics of the "wall of disease?" Sir Richard Francis Burton was a 19<sup>th</sup> century British explorer, geographer, spy, master of disguise (like the author Burton explored forbidden Muslim holy sites), linguist (29 languages), and translator of the Arabian Nights. Compare the threats posed a century ago in the Balkans with those relevant to the future character of world politics. What are the four key issues? (14-19)
5. (1) What makes the environment the national security issue of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? What does the author believe will be at the center of the foreign policy doughnut? What insight is provided by Thomas Fraser Homer-Dixon? What does he mean by environmentally induced praetorian [military] or "hard regimes?" **Neo-Malthusians** (p. 22) are those who

write in the tradition of the early classical economist, the Rev. **Thomas Malthus** (p. 9), who warned of overpopulation as food increased arithmetically while population grew geometrically or exponentially. In the emerging **bifurcated world**, how will life in the post-historical realm of **Francis Fukuyama's** [viz. **Friedrich Nietzsche's**] Last Man compare with that of the historical realm of **Thomas Hobbes's** First Man? What makes China the quintessential example of environmental degradation? (19-26)

6. (2) According to Samuel Huntington, what are the three types of conflict through which the world has been moving in the last century? According to the author and Fouad Ajami, what makes the alliance network in the Caucasus differ from this model? How does the author's *Road Warrior/Mad Max* vision of the future compare with George Kennan's on pp. 20-21. (26-30)
7. How does **Altindag** (Golden Mountain) in Turkey differ from a shantytown in Abidjan? Why are the usual social problems largely absent? What implications does the strength of this culture have for the future of the Middle East? What has happened to the sense of history in such places? What gives Islamic extremism its strength in the cities? What advantage has made it easier to reconcile Islam with modernization in Turkey? (30-37)
8. (3) Why are Turkey's borders so stable compared to West Africa's? What are some of the lies of the mapmakers? How did it happen that maps (the "totalizing classificatory grid"), along with frontiers and states, came to shape the grammar of modernism? How do the Kurds redefine political realities in the Middle East? What are the implications for the West of the following observation: "The most distant recollection of these youths will be the West's humiliation of colonially invented Iraq in 1991?" Given the bankruptcy of secular ideologies, what then? What is Turkey's, India's, and Africa's problem? (37-43).
9. (4) In this era of postmodernism, what has happened to the classificatory grid, the country maps that "were the equivalent of an accountant's ledger books" (39)? How has this change affected the nature of warfare? Why do some people find war to be an end in itself, as noted by Martin van Creveld? What has changed since the days of Clausewitz, who characterized war as "policy (or politics) by other means?" Before the birth of modernism [with the **Treaty of Westphalia**, 1648], "there was no 'politics' as we have come to know the term." What is the "radius of trust" within tribal societies? What does the "plethora of short-lived cease-fires in the Balkans and the Caucasus" [and Israel, Liberia, Kashmir, India, *et al.*] prove? What happens (to borders, monuments, identities) when cultures rather than states fight? What are some characteristics of "Van Creveld's pre-Westphalian vision of worldwide low-intensity conflict?" (43-50)
10. What factors would shape a contemporary "protean cartographic hologram"-type map? For what reasons are "both India and Pakistan increasingly dysfunctional?" Identify some of the possible effects of climate change in India and Egypt. How does a multicultural regime, such as the United States increasingly is becoming, differ from a nation-state society? What are some of the signs? Why might "Africa's distress . . . exert a destabilizing influence on the United States?" How might North America be effectively reconstituted? [*e.g.*, a new territory, Nunavut, was created for Canadian aborigines just a few years ago]. (50-57)

## Review

communalism  
deforestation  
"Chicago"  
wall of disease  
Neo-Malthusians  
Thomas Hobbes

animism  
trends in West Africa  
Nigerian hegemony  
George Kennan  
Thomas Malthus  
Last Man vs. First Man

polygamy  
Abidjan's success  
population vs. borders  
Thomas F. Homer-Dixon  
Francis Fukuyama  
Samuel P. Huntington

Azeri Turks  
rural vs. urban poverty  
states and frontiers  
Carl von Clausewitz

Christian Armenians  
advantages of Islam  
Kurds  
*re-primitivized man*

*gecekondus*, such as Altindag  
Kemal Atatürk  
Martin van Creveld  
character of postmodern war

## II. WAS DEMOCRACY JUST A MOMENT?

### Study Questions

1. Why did Alexis de Tocqueville believe that **despotism** “is more particularly to be feared in democratic ages?” What bearing does this have on the evolution of democracy today? What insights about democratic Athens did Polybius and Thucydides have to offer? [cf. Hegel’s owl of Minerva]. How did the American Founders view human nature? (59-61)
2. Where did democracy lead to in Sudan in 1985? Under what conditions does it become highly risky? What can we learn from Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, and others? What are some prerequisites for a successful democracy? Why is China better off than Russia? What did Reinhold Niebuhr think of the imposition of American will abroad? According to Tocqueville, when is democracy most likely to emerge successfully? Why does Yoweri Museveni oppose multi-party democracy? Who was the ghost at the 1787 Constitutional Convention? Why? What role did democracy play in the Rwanda genocide? How was Greece able to achieve stability? Why does democracy often weaken states? How are middle classes created? What is required for modern bureaucracies? Is there something hypocritical about US attitudes toward authoritarian regimes? (61-72)
3. For what did Isaiah Berlin find the idea of “historical inevitability” to blame? What did Thomas Hobbes believe about human nature? What role has been played by democratic anarchy and military tyranny in such places as Pakistan and Afghanistan? Why did Turkey’s military paternalism arise? How did Alberto Fujimori’s authoritarian rule develop? What are some of the Hobbesian realities that have necessitated radical action? What does the author mean by hybrid regimes? What have been the fruits of Lee Kuan Yew’s neo-authoritarianism in Singapore? What has happened in South Africa with the advent of democracy? What has happened to democracy in Cambodia? (72-79)
4. What makes even authoritarian regimes legitimate? What are now the unseen arbiters of power? What is Malaysia’s “multimedia super-corridor?” What is Executive Outcomes? How do modern corporations resemble ancient oligarchies and feudal domains? How does ABB encourage a “cross-cultural glue?” (80-83)
5. What are some of the overt as well as covert forms of emerging corporate power? Are Americans individualists or conformists? How are cities, universities, and other entities being redefined by corporations? Illustrate Saint-Simon’s thought that “the government of people will be replaced by the administration of things” [a theme of C. S. Lewis’s *The Abolition of Man*]. What does this mean for our communal life, democracy, and civil society [a theme of Robert Putnam’s *Bowling Alone*]? How do the challenges of corporate wealth and power differ from those of a century ago? (83-89)
6. In the view of ancient playwrights and modern philosophers like Ferguson and Tocqueville, what is an effect of affluence or an abundance of material possessions? [Hilaire Belloc’s *The Servile State* addresses the same issue]. If political apathy may be beneficial, under what circumstances is it apt to be harmful? Why the fascination with spectacles and celebrities? What lesson did Moses Finley draw from ancient political elites? What does the author mean by “resident expatriates?” How might James Madison’s idea [in *Federalist*, no. 10] of a territorially large republic with an “umpire”

state apply to the new global regime that is emerging? What social changes can be expected to accompany suburbanization and regional competition? (89-95)

7. What did the Founders admire about Sparta? Why are democracy and oligarchy shading into one another? What distinguishes rulers from ruled and haves from have-nots? Analyze: "this productive anarchy will require the supervision of tyrannies – or else there will be no justice for anyone." Why? What happens to the West? (95-98)

### Review

Alexis de Tocqueville	Thucydides	James Madison
prerequisites for a successful democracy		Reinhold Niebuhr
Yoweri Museveni	Oliver Cromwell	Hutus and Tutsis
origin of states	origin of middle classes	Isaiah Berlin
Thomas Hobbes	Moin Qureishi	Alberto Fujimori
surveillance and police	hybrid regimes	Lee Kuan Yew
Aung San Suu Kyi	Hun Sen	legitimacy
multimedia super-corridor	ABB management teams	Henri de Saint-Simon
Greek definition of a slave	effects of affluence	apathy
resident expatriates	umpire regime	oligarchy and democracy

## III. IDEALISM WON'T STOP MASS MURDER

### Study Questions

1. What is the Holocaust mentality and how does it express a faith in Progress? (99-100)
2. Why is mass murder a **pathology of modernism**? What is required to ignite a bureaucratic killing machine? What are the hazards of American intervention to stop genocide? Given public reluctance to tolerate casualties in an intervention, when is humanitarian intervention most likely? When are war criminals most likely to be caught and when is the United States most apt to support murderous regimes? When is colonial rule to be preferred over democracy and self-determination? Why is a **balance of power** regime often preferable to **liberal internationalism**? [Hint: liberalism often fails to live up to its press]. (100-03)
3. How did President Carter's human rights policy contribute to tyranny and collectivization in Ethiopia? What lessons did Israel learn from mass murder? Why are effective intelligence services indispensable? (103-04)

### Review

Holocaust mentality	mass murder	Dayton Peace Accords
balance of power	liberal internationalism	human rights policy

## IV. SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE

### Study Questions

1. Despite media criticism of the CIA, why is the intelligence industry becoming more necessary for our country's well-being? What kind of enemy are the lean and mobile military units of the Special Forces designed to fight? What are the advantages of using

such “quiet professionals?” (105-07)

2. What kind of men are sought and produced by the Special Forces? [Sir Richard Francis Burton is also mentioned on pp. 16-17]. What is Pakistan’s ISI? (107-10)

### Review

Special Forces

Sir Richard Francis Burton

Pakistan’s ISI

## V. AND NOW FOR THE NEWS: THE DISTURBING FRESHNESS OF GIBBON’S *DECLINE AND FALL*

### Study Questions

1. From what humble beginnings did the early European state emerge? What makes Gibbon’s work an indispensable, if still controversial, guide? What concepts and themes did his work derive from Baron Montesquieu [who was nevertheless wrong-headed about the operation of the English political system]? What were (and are) the real changes? How does the United States resemble Gibbon’s Rome? What makes his work contemporary in its relevance? What is the tragedy for so much of the world? What view did Gibbon take of Christianity? How does Gibbon’s conservatism accord with Madison’s [who was similarly influenced by Montesquieu]? (111-17)

### Review

Montesquieu  
James Madison

Caracalla

Edmund Burke

## VI. PROPORTIONALISM: A REALISTIC APPROACH TO FOREIGN POLICY

### Study Questions

1. What are the two contradictory realizations that may provide the basis for a durable foreign policy consensus? What does the author mean by proportionalism? What are the three aspects of foreign-aid proportionalism? Besides its intrinsic value, why is women’s education so important from a consequentialist (results-oriented standpoint)? What is the **Powell Doctrine**? What is the parents’ test for military intervention? In the event of intervention, what advice does George C. Kennan offer? (119-25)

### Review

foreign-aid proportionalism

Powell Doctrine

## VII. KISSINGER, METTERNICH, AND REALISM

### Study Questions

1. What was Kissinger's early view of nuclear warfare and view of John Foster Dulles's idea of "**massive retaliation**?" How could Kissinger justify writing, as he did, a dissertation on the court diplomacy of early 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe? What was the great accomplishment of the international order [the Concert of Europe] that was built at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 by Metternich and Castlereagh. (127-31)
2. What is the danger of a policy of mere avoidance of war? When and why does **appeasement** [the word used to describe the 1938 debacle at Munich] occur? When are coalitions against revolutions most likely to arise? Where did Kissinger's imagination fail him with respect to the Soviet Union? Why did he believe it was necessary to use military force against Saddam Hussein in 1990. What principles did Kissinger extract from his dread of revolution? (131-37)
3. What view did Kennan, Niebuhr, and Morgenthau take of the missionary idealism of America's ruling elite? [A recent history of American foreign policy by Walter McDougall is revealingly entitled *Promised Land, Crusader State*]. Similarly, Kaplan notes what some have called an **extrovert/introvert cycle** of "intense hope and activity abroad followed by morose withdrawal." In what way did Castlereagh's active support for Greek independence reflect Britain's insularity? Does his point extend to America? What then is realism, practically speaking? What does the author consider to be Metternich's ultimate accomplishment? (137-41)
4. How does Kissinger characterize Metternich? What makes policy making different from administration? What flashes of insight were shown by George Ball, George Kennan, and Loy Henderson? What are some of the larger issues surrounding the Nixon Administration's decisions about bringing the Vietnam War to an end? What were some of Nixon's real achievements during this period? What point does the author make by saying: "What strains credulity is the idea that our Cold War adversaries would *not* take into consideration Kissinger's and Nixon's bloodthirstiness in Indochina in the face of fierce criticism from the American public." Why did Nixon believe that "it would not be such a bad thing if the Soviets believed he was capable of irrational action?" Such are the imponderables (e.g., the hypothetical but unproven benefits of Nixon's Vietnam policy or Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon) that make evaluation of strategic decisions so difficult after the fact. (141-51)
5. How might Nixon and Kissinger be criticized as "not sufficiently realistic" (as Morgenthau did criticize them)? Why do Americans profess idealism while employing realist? What was the public mood following the end of the Napoleonic wars? What is a drawback of peaceful and secure times (such as the years before September 11)? (151-55)

### Review

John Foster Dulles	massive retaliation	missionary idealism
Concert of Europe	appeasement	Kissinger's principles
missionary idealism	realism	Greek independence struggle
Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon	Prince Metternich	millennial hopes and disillusion

## VIII. CONRAD'S *NOSTROMO* AND THE THIRD WORLD

### Study Questions

1. Why is the lack of **imagination** a problem of bourgeois (*i.e.*, liberal) societies? [Think of Edmund Burke's moral imagination, Irving Babbitt's idyllic imagination (attributed to Rousseau), and T. S. Eliot's diabolic imagination (attributed to Thomas Hardy and other

