

East fiasco. The American “hyper-power” can still afford such follies as our recent Balkan adventure, but that is no reason why we should engage in them. □

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## The Coming Global Superstorm

by Art Bell and Whitley Strieber

Pocket Books • 2000 • 255 pages • \$23.95

Reviewed by Patrick J. Michaels

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Academics like Your Obedient Servant are instructed that literature has to be analyzed in terms of its social and societal context. From this, I conclude that Art Bell and Whitley Strieber’s *The Coming Global Superstorm*, more than anything else, is a monument to the failure of public education in science and technology. Otherwise, no one would buy this book.

Despite the protestations by our greener friends that “the climate problem” is the most complex issue ever confronting mankind, it’s really pretty simple. The sun warms the earth, and the warming of the atmosphere creates something called climate. Embedded within climate is day-to-day weather.

According to Bell and Strieber, something very funny is going to happen to the weather. Particularly, history is going to repeat itself. The last time this something happened was about 8,000 years ago, as a result of a nuclear war waged by a society that had already discovered space travel. Bet you didn’t know that!

What happened then and will happen again soon is that the stratosphere and the troposphere will change places. The latter is the bottom 80 percent of the atmosphere, and it is largely separated from the layer above it by something called physics. A bit of air exchanges each year, but owing to the fact that temperatures are uniform in the stratosphere (“stratified”) there’s little vertical motion.

The two layers will turn over, the authors

say, as a result of the unhappy combination of the fact that the solar ascendant sign has shifted from Pisces to Aquarius and the fact that we are burning fossil fuels, causing global warming. Suddenly the temperature of the high latitudes drops 15 degrees, while the rest of the planet is outrageously hot. As the cold stratospheric air flips over the moisture-laden troposphere, a hemispheric scale low-pressure system produces hundreds of feet of snow. It drops 100 degrees in one hour in the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. The snow stops between New York and Baltimore, thank God, so that the federal government is still here to save us. (Some writers never give up on their philosophy.)

Subsequently, much of the snow melts, creating a huge flood that kills just about everyone left. Then the eternal whiteness of being sets in (because there’s still a lot of snow left over), and an ice age ensues. In the end, searchers discover some people alive in New York City, who kept themselves alive by burning books. *The Coming Global Superstorm* should have been one of them.

Stupidity sells. At the time of this writing, Bell and Strieber’s fairy tale for gullible adults book is listed #6, out of nearly 6,400 “Environmental Science” titles listed at Amazon.com. Perhaps worse are the online reviews. Most people believe this stuff! Well, what do you expect, when the current Maryland “Standards of Learning” exam requires students to show how astrology determines their lives. I guess the acceptance of this egregious nonsense isn’t surprising. After all, Strieber got to tout his book on *Today* with Katie Couric, who couldn’t come up with anything resembling a reasonable question. The least she could have asked was, “Mr. Strieber, in your last book you say you were ‘probed,’ I can’t say where on this show, by aliens. Isn’t it true that this is where you were given the knowledge to write this book?”

The answer, unfortunately, is in the affirmative. Which goes to show where our heads are on the issue of climate change.

One more important nugget. The reason that we don’t stop global warming enough to prevent the coming global superstorm is the activities of a small but “highly activist

coal company [called] Western Fuels,” which “maintain[s] a cadre of individuals with university degrees who skillfully drain the issue of all sense of crisis.” That’s me, folks! Thanks, Bell and Strieber, but it’s not Western Fuels and six college professors who are somehow endangering the entire world. It’s the stupidity that surrounds global warming hysteria. □

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### **A Necessary Evil: A History of American Distrust of Government**

by Garry Wills

Simon & Schuster • 1999 • 365 pages • \$25.00

Reviewed by Joseph R. Stromberg

**P**rofessor Garry Wills loves government. Perhaps one day he will tell us if he believes in *any* substantive limitations on government at all. Wills’s long-standing love of government can be seen in “The Convenient State,” an essay he wrote when he was his own brand of conservative. Since the mid-sixties, when he was first traumatized by inland “rednecks,” he has expounded a unique brand of Tory socialism.

Wills is very unhappy about the rise of “anti-government” movements that claim part of the American tradition. The solution? Eviscerate the tradition! The result is a collection of scattered attacks on various ideological items that Wills sees as central to (mostly) “right-wing” distrust of government power. If the attacks succeed, then Wills will have cut the ground out from under these paranoid miscreants. Wills organizes his thoughts around Revolutionary Myths, Constitutional Myths, Nullifiers, Seceders, Insurrectionists, Vigilantes, Withdrawers, and Disobeyers. Like Firesign Theater, Wills asserts that everything we know is wrong. Among our delusions are the following: militias were important in the Revolution, the founders wanted divided and “inefficient” (his word) government, and the states were sovereign.

Mythmakers include Jefferson, John Taylor, Calhoun, and contemporary academics who take the Second Amendment seriously.

Wills’s treatment of militias and arms depends heavily on the findings of Michael Bellesiles, and will fall as quickly—and as far—as those findings. It won’t be long. *OED* in hand, Wills takes an eighteenth-century philological field trip through the Second Amendment. The tour is very nearly as convincing as was the “psychic archeology” of the early 1980s. “Bear arms” in English echoes set Latin and Greek phrases and can only refer to organized, public war. And no one, I suppose, had ever read Blackstone.

Wills contrasts “anti-governmental values”—“provincial, amateur, authentic, spontaneous, populist, voluntary”—with “governmental values”—“cosmopolitan, expert, authoritative, efficient, elite, regulatory.” This is nothing more than his old song-and-dance that while the anti-federalist masses wallowed around in primitive republicanism, clever fellows like James Madison and Alexander Hamilton took up the modern ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment.

Such far-seeing fellows could not have wanted government to be “inefficient” or weak; it follows that they didn’t really provide for checks and balances in the way we imagine they did. Here Wills is not exactly wrong, but Raoul Berger made a better case for this than Wills has done. Legislative supremacy—if that was the Founders’ plan—was less threatening than it sounds because the Constitution was thought to establish a system of enumerated powers. But Wills won’t put up with this and argues, rather implausibly, that there is only an enumeration of worthy projects, the *powers* to carry them out being, apparently, endless. Wills must also claim that the union preceded the states. This he does by unconvincing assertion and quotations from such authorities as Lincoln. Abe is even quoted as denying that *Texas* had ever been sovereign, an absurdity not worth refuting.

Despite impressive pyrotechnics and clever tropes, the case is not made. But Wills has a secret weapon: Little Jamie Madison’s secret opinions. Madison, it turns out, was so advanced that he anticipated the Fourteenth