

Weapons of Mass Destruction for Dummies

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Master document: <http://www.hoverclub.net/WeaponsOfMassDestructionForDummies.pdf>

Introduction

This document describes in brief how to destroy a democracy to a degree that international terrorism could never hope to achieve.

Our elected officials and our more visible citizens have begun using these weapons against our country. They have forgotten that they are not the government. They have forgotten what I consider to be the most important nine words of the Constitution of the United States: *Of the people, by the people, for the people.*

In hopes that some of our elected officials will read this and somehow use it to avert a messy end to our nation's government, I'm having my say.

Who's in power?

Democracy, by definition, is government *of* the people being governed, *by* the people being governed, *for* the people who are being governed, which means in their best interests. Given the fact that there is no quantifying definition of "our best interests", We the People define that ourselves.

We the People do not elect you guys so that you make all the decisions and lord it up over us. You are not our kings and queens or dukes and duchesses or any other type of royalty. *We elect you so that you can represent us.* Your job as an elected official in *any* branch of government is to *represent your constituency.* Given my estimate of the density of our current body of elected officials, maybe I need to emphasize that more:

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You don't have *power* but rather *authority*. Your authority is a measure of trust by your constituency that you will do your best to represent their interests. If you violate that trust or if your decisions are not truly those of the people, you will be replaced, and not necessarily by someone the voters like better but by someone the voters *hope is better*. If your position has no term limits, then your failure to win the next term means you failed your people, and they're going to try something else.

You were elected as a member of whatever party you belong to. The people who voted for you are probably mostly members of that same party. However, you also received votes from members of other parties for some reason or other. What's more, chances are the election was not a landslide. If you won by 60% then 40% of the *participating voters* wanted something else enough to vote, and more importantly *the number of people who could have registered to vote probably didn't think voting would improve their lives*. Moreover, chances are that the people who voted for you likely did so not because they believe in you, but because they think you're the lesser of however many evils that were on the ballot.

The key issue here is that you were elected to your office by a small minority of the population you represent. The fastest way to get those who did not previously vote into the polls is to mess up as badly as the currently outbound bunch did.

The 2006 election probably represents not so much a preference for the Democrats as much as it shows an abhorrence of the Republicans. Again, that's not a statement of political view but an observation of behavior.

The first weapon

The thing that's so destructive to a democracy is this partisan politicking that happens throughout the term. You guys (ALL PARTIES) act like it's *we vs they* all the time. Wake up. You represent your constituency. What do the people who live in your district want? Vote that way. Season it a bit with your own views, but keep in mind who your constituency is. Simpler yet, vote your conscience and as long as that conscience reasonably represents the will of the people, you will stay in office. If every elected official ran under the banner of their conscience and properly represented it, and then *voted* that conscience, there would be a much higher voter turnout and a much happier population.

Instead, we have Republicans banding together against the Democrats, and Democrats banding together against the Republicans. This is not democracy. It's not even single or double party rule. It's the will of the party leadership being inflicted on the entire nation. It's empire building, which is nothing but a power game for those people who are so blinded by their own image in the mirror that they can't see the transient nature of their authority.

Your fellow party members holding office for some other district are *not* your constituency! They should hold very little sway over your decisions, other than as a sounding board to see all sides of an issue.

The party politics we see in all levels of government in the United States today is a form of extremism which is no better than the coercion methods used by terrorist organizations throughout the world.

These party politics block the public will. They convert our government from a democracy to something else I don't have a word for. Feudal warlords playing king of the hill? Did we learn nothing since we were in the day care throwing toys at each other?

This is not a soap opera! This is the government of the most powerful nation in the world! Grow up, people!

The second weapon

The force that causes us to bicker indefinitely is called the media. In their efforts to simplify a topic concisely, they polarize the issue. You're either with this camp or you're with that one. For or against, or maybe undecided. Worse yet, society has started to follow that lead. It's especially true with politics.

The world does not work that way. This tendency to polarize things is another form of extremism, and our media is completely extremist in that way.

In every issue, there are exceptions to what's right and wrong. We won't all agree on where the line is, but the *real* line is not at one end of the spectrum of choices. Portraying an issue as being one of two choices is certain to destroy the chances of coming up with a correct answer. If a truly functional democracy makes a choice and implements it, and that choice turns out to be wrong, then the collective whole can make that choice again.

The media is a critical part of democracy and of a free world, but let's hold off on simplifying the world. Most of us (We the people. . .) have enough of an understanding of the world around us to figure out how the land lays if you just report the facts.

The media's responsibility is to report facts without spin. I grew up watching Walter Cronkite do his thing. While he never told a truly objective story, he certainly sounded like it and he had an integrity that I have not seen in any reporter since. Why not? Is it that hard? Is integrity no longer important?

The third weapon

Lobbyists. Lobbying is an important part of government, but it has been hijacked by the places with money. A professional lobbyist is a travesty. Lobbying is a mechanism by which concerned citizens express their opinion to the governing body. An oil company is *not* a concerned citizen. There might be concerned citizens working there, but the oil company does not vote and should not vote.

I'm picking on the oil industry right now because it's front and center. Insert your favorite industry here.

Money talks, but it needs to talk less and through different channels. A lot of money seems to flow from the lobbyists to the elected officials. That's unethical even if it's legal. If the employees of some industry are concerned, they can write their congressman. If they think it actually makes a difference, they *will* write their congressman.

The argument I've heard is that lobbying provides a huge amount of campaign funding. Well maybe We the People are sick of hearing your empty promises. Put up a web page showing where you stand and your voting history on important issues, and have a couple ads that show your smile and point people at the web site. We aren't so concerned about hearing what the other guy did wrong, that's what courts are for. We want to know what you'll do right.

The balance on this will not shift any time soon, but I think that if the money stops talking directly to the government, the constituency will start talking for them. We don't want business to go elsewhere. We want the business to be profitable so they stay here and so they can afford to pay us.

Who does not vote?

I've seen "get out the vote" efforts since I was a kid. Party hacks can't seem to figure out why we don't care so much. There's a very simple answer.

We don't believe that the person who gets the job, whoever that is, will properly represent us.

I personally believe that he who does not vote has no right to complain about the government. By surrendering to apathy we automatically accept the trash that can afford the best ad campaign and lie most effectively.

However, if every official who is ever elected blindly goes forth to inflict his impression of how the world should be upon the masses without paying attention to the public will, we're in trouble. Sooner or later they realize that they have *power*. People with *power* can find ways to benefit themselves. Chances are, the person who ran for office figured that out before he or she even started the campaign. Those people are crooks. It's not inherently bad to benefit from your administration, but it *is* bad to do so when your constituency does not benefit in equal measure.

In my opinion, people don't vote because everyone turns out the same no matter who gets into office. If the candidates were honest, there would be more citizens registered and more voters voting.

Who should run?

If your views seem to be representative of your would-be constituency, then you should run. If you have ideas that would improve the way things work in some meaningful way, you should run. If nobody else who represents that faction of citizens is running, you should run. If you're surprised that a bunch of people around you suggest running for office, you should run.

If you *want* the position you would run for, *you should not run!* Wanting a position of power is the first sign that you are not fit to hold that power.

The good elected official

There are some good elected officials in government. In the current system, they are visible because they don't vote straight down the party line. They are extremely visible to their constituency, and they are repeatedly voted into office in spite of not voting the party line *because they represent their constituency!*

There are not simply two (or four or six or fifty) opinions on how the United States should work. For every citizen, there is at least one opinion on any issue. Those opinions will break down into a relatively small number of categories, but the specific lines where the decision changes on each topic, the specific answers, are as diverse as the people who have thought about it.

The good reporter

As in the previous section, there are many opinions on any topic. Try to accurately represent the issues at hand, and don't be such a pest about it. I don't care who's doing what in Hollywood, I care about things that change my life. Give those guys a break, they're sick of you.

The good lobbyist

It's fine to organize a bunch of concerned citizens so they write *their* elected officials. It's not fine to pay somebody to write all of Congress a million times. No money should change hands between the lobbyists and the elected officials, other than the individual citizens offering campaign contributions which are allowed by law.

Who is this guy?

If there is a peasant class in the United States, I'm from it. I grew up well below the poverty line. I attended college, but did not get a degree. I've learned as best I can over the years, but have no certifications to show for it.