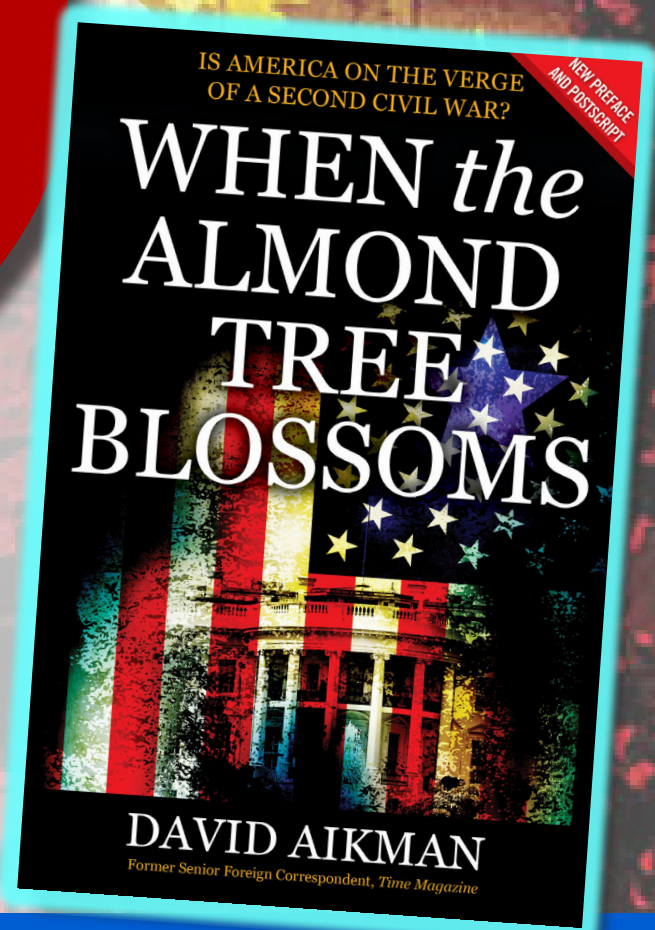


“A fast-paced story that is also a searching commentary on the logic of today’s culture wars and **A HAUNTING VISION OF ONE POSSIBLE AMERICAN FUTURE.**”

—OS GUINNESS,
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A TIMELY THRILLER addressing
WORLD POLITICS, SECRET AGENDAS,
& ultimately **BIBLICAL PROPHECY**



“A NIGHTMARISH VISION OF WHAT THE WORLD MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN A MERE FIVE YEARS”
—FRANCIS FUKUYAMA, political science professor and bestselling author

DAVID AIKMAN, FORMER SENIOR FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT FOR TIME MAGAZINE, first published *When the Almond Tree Blossoms* in 1993, as the Cold War ended and political polarization grew in the United States. Twenty-three years later, his novel is as timely as ever. The 2016 presidential election pits unabashed socialists and jaded capitalists against each other, and the nation seems more politically polarized than it’s been since the Civil War.

THIS BOOK IS A REMINDER OF WHAT’S AT STAKE: NOT ONLY FREEDOM, BUT LIFE AND PEACE.

It’s 1998 in this alternative timeline. The United States is controlled by a radical, collectivist regime bent on maintaining control despite a growing nuclear threat from the resistance.

Douglas Richfield supported the People’s Movement early on and now participates in its regime as an assistant adviser for protocol. He’s known as an “activist” and a “progressive,” but he’s not entirely at ease with the movement he’s always supported. Limitations on freedom of speech, along with military police brutality, give him pause. A conversation with a beautiful stranger only increases his confusion. Perhaps the People’s Movement regime is neither as secure nor as noble as he once thought.

Just as these doubts begin to form, the regime takes him out of his comfortable office job and into the field, where he must choose once and for all whether his loyalties lie with the People’s Movement or the Constitutionalist resistance.

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Biography of **DAVID AIKMAN**

David Aikman is an award-winning print and broadcast journalist, a best-selling author, and a foreign affairs commentator based in the Washington, D.C.-area. His wide-ranging professional achievements include an extensive career at TIME Magazine with reporting spanning the globe of nearly all the major historical events of the time.

Dr. Aikman began his reporting career with TIME Magazine in 1971. In the 23 years that followed, he reported from five continents and more than 55 countries, and wrote three consecutive Man of the Year cover stories. As a TIME Magazine Senior Correspondent and foreign correspondent, he interviewed numerous major world figures, from Mother Teresa to Manuel Noriega, from Alexander Solzhenitsyn to Pham Van Dong, from Boris Yeltsin to Billy Graham. Dr. Aikman was assigned to bureaus in Hong Kong, from where he covered the entire Asian region; in Beijing, China; in Berlin, Germany, where he covered all of Eastern Europe; and in Jerusalem, Israel, where he covered the entire Middle East. He was bureau chief in Berlin, Jerusalem and Beijing

before returning to the United States to cover the State Department until his departure in 1994 to devote his time to writing books.

Since leaving TIME, he has authored ten books including *The Mirage of Peace: Understanding the Never-Ending Conflict in the Middle East* (Regal 2009), a comprehensive overview of the nations and societies of the strife-torn region and the historical roots of the intransigent conflicts that have defied attempts to bring a lasting peace. His 2004 biography, *A Man of Faith: The Spiritual Journey of George W. Bush* (W Group), was a bestseller and was translated into Chinese and published – entirely uncensored – in China. The presidential biography has also been released in Norwegian. *Jesus in Beijing* has been translated into several languages, including Korean and Swedish, and been published worldwide. The most comprehensive book-length report on Christianity in China, it is considered a must-read for anyone interested in the Chinese church.

Trained as a historian, Dr. Aikman is a professor of history at Patrick Henry College in Virginia, where he also coaches young writers. His academic career includes two decades of teaching international relations at the University of the Nations in Hawaii. Dr. Aikman also serves as a Senior Fellow for The Trinity Forum, a leadership academy that seeks to transform society by helping leaders examine issues in their personal and public lives in the context of faith.

With special expertise in China, Russia, the Middle East, Mongolia and religious freedom issues worldwide, Dr. Aikman is frequently invited to deliver expert testimony at Congressional hearings and is a popular speaker at conferences, seminars, panels and to academic, church and professional groups at events all over the world.

A graduate of Oxford University's Worcester College, Dr. Aikman holds a Ph.D. from the University of Washington in Russian and Chinese history. Dr. Aikman speaks six languages, including French, German, Russian, and Chinese.

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SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR DAVID AIKMAN AUTHOR OF

When the Almond Tree Blossoms

Is America On The Verge of a Second Civil War?

Our guest today is David Aikman. He is a best-selling author of at least a dozen books, has written more magazine and news articles than one can count as a journalist and foreign policy consultant. David is a graduate from Oxford University's Worcester College and gained a PhD from the University of Washington in Russian and Chinese history. He's a true veteran on foreign affairs working as a journalist for Time Magazine from 1971 to 1994, during which he reported on nearly all the major historical events of the time. He has interviewed several major world figures, including Mother Teresa, Manuel Noriega, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Pham Van Dong, Boris Yeltsin and Billy Graham. Since 2005, he has served as a Professor of History at Patrick Henry College. He is also a Senior Fellow at The Trinity Forum. He recently re-released a novel he originally wrote several years ago titled ***When the Almond Tree Blossoms***, a timely thrilling novel that questions if America is on the verge of a second Civil War.

Q. Why did you seek to re-issue a novel that was first published 23 years ago?

A. First, because the domestic polarization that has taken place in the United States has become even more extreme than at the time when I first published the novel, while the international scenario has confirmed many of the developments that I originally projected back in the 1990s.

Q. What was your main intent in writing the novel?

A. In addition to indicating what a new American Civil War might be like, I wanted to portray how life in the United States would feel under the heel of a left-wing totalitarian regime that was brought into power by revolutionary violence.

Q. How would you describe the genre of this novel? Science fiction, political thriller, futuristic action story?

A. It is a futuristic political thriller. The plot focuses on the efforts of one side in the Civil War—the People's movement—to uncover the details of the strategic trump card held by the other side—the constitutionalists. The trump card is the existence of three Ohio-class nuclear submarines somewhere in the world's oceans. Wherever they are, they make it impossible for the People's movement to threaten any kind of nuclear or WMD action against the constitutionalists.

Q. Who is the protagonist in the story?

A. He is a mid-level government bureaucrat in the People's movement who becomes disillusioned with the regime and decides to work for the other side in the Civil War.

Q. What international developments brought up in the original novel have been confirmed by actual world events in the last three decades?

A. Firstly, political polarization within the United States has developed to the point where a number of different people have speculated about the danger of a the civil war breaking out. Second, Russia has emerged from its post-communist period of democracy as an authoritarian ultranationalist regime eager to wield power throughout the world, and especially in the Middle East. Third, conflict in the Middle East is still one of the most volatile elements on the global horizon. Fourth, China has also emerged as an increasingly nationalistic power asserting its role in the entire Far East region.

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Q. Are there any lessons that you want the reader of this story to take away?"

A. First, a new Civil War in America would be a very cruel development and incredibly destructive for the whole country as well as the two sides involved in it. Second, a new American Civil War would be even more likely to attract foreign involvement than the original Civil War almost did.

Q. What is the significance of the title, *When the Almond Tree Blossoms*?

A. There is a verse in the Bible in chapter 12 of the book of Ecclesiastes referring to some of the health challenges to people of advanced years... "When the almond tree blossoms, and the grasshopper drags himself along and desire no longer is stirred." The name Project Almond refers to the top-secret Pentagon program to retain an independent submarine-based nuclear even if the strategic defeat on the global scene led to the surrender of the American military .

Q. To what extent did your own experience as a reporter and author contribute to the story and the details of the two sides in the Civil War?

A. My experience of three decades of reporting on and writing about Communist Party totalitarian regimes was formative in sketching the scenario of the book. Also, my careful study of left wing and right wing ideologies within the US helped me illustrate the core of the two sides fighting the Civil War.

Q. Do you think there is a real danger of a future Civil War in the US?

A. Yes. I think the current election cycle has vividly depicted the great split ideologically in the United States between progressives on the one hand and conservatives on the other. There are any number of scenarios which could trigger violence between the two sides that the authorities might not be able to control. There is also such a deep ideological mistrust between left and right in the current US said it is very hard to conceive of any common ground that the two sides share that might soften the mutual antagonism.

Q. Your book does not indicate which side actually wins the Civil War. Did you deliberately leave the outcome vague or are readers supposed to come to a specific conclusion?

A. Many people who have read *When the Almond Tree Blossoms* have asked why I did not have a follow-up volume completing the narrative that was started in the original novel. There are two explanations of this. First of all, I did not have the time to work on and work out a complete story of how the Civil War comes to an end. Second, I wanted readers to infer the likely developments that would follow the events of the original story.

Q. What particular features of your novel would you most want readers to focus on?

A. I do not develop this speculative scenario that one might imagine if the conservative side won a future Civil War. But I think when progressive regimes come to power and imposes their will on populations through main force the kind of ideological squabbling among factions illustrated in chapter 16 typifies the usual consequences of violent revolution: the revolution devours its own children.

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