

The Deepening Shame of Guantanamo

Exclusive: For more than a decade, the Guantanamo Bay prison has been a blot on America's conscience. President Obama vowed to close it but acceded to congressional demands to keep it open. Now, an emerging humanitarian crisis a mass hunger strike is drawing only scant attention, says ex-CIA analyst Ray McGovern.

By Ray McGovern

There have been nine congressional hearings on the Benghazi controversy with more to come but almost no one in Congress dares put the spotlight on the unfolding scandal surrounding the Guantanamo Bay prison where most of the remaining 166 inmates have opted to "escape" from indefinite detention via the only way open to them starving themselves to death.

One exception to the congressional cowardice is Rep. Jim Moran, D-Virginia, who sponsored a highly instructive panel discussion on the prison at Guantanamo last Friday. Why simply a "briefing," rather than a formal House hearing? Simple. Not one of the majority Republicans who currently chair committees in the House and have the power to call hearings wants Americans to hear the details of this blight on the nation's conscience.

To be completely fair, the reigning reluctance seems, actually, to be a bipartisan affair. Moran is one of the few Democrats possessed of a conscience and enough moral courage to let the American people know what is being done in their name. For other lawmakers, it is a mite too risky.

Folksy folks like Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-South Carolina, a member of the Armed Services Committee which is supposed to exercise oversight of the lethal operations carried out by the Joint Special Operations Command, make no bones about the dilemma they prefer to duck when it comes to letting detainees die at Guantanamo or letting the president blow up suspected terrorists via drone strikes.

Here's Graham quoted in *Esquire* magazine last summer on why Congress has engaged in so little oversight of the lethal drone program: "Who wants to be the congressman or senator holding the hearing as to whether the president should be aggressively going after terrorists? Nobody. And that's why Congress has been AWOL in this whole area." The same thinking applies to showing any mercy for the people held at Guantanamo.

It seems to me that Guantanamo is a three-fold scandal: (1) the abomination of

the cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment given those prisoners; (2) the reality that most of those remaining were cleared for release more than three years ago; and (3) the fact that Moran's was the very first congressionally sponsored public "briefing" of its kind more than 11 years late.

While there has been endless attention paid to how the Benghazi talking points were drafted for use on Sunday talk shows last September, the American people have been spared high-profile testimony about how 86 of the remaining 166 prisoners at Guantanamo were cleared for release more than three years ago following a year-long investigation of their cases by an interagency task force of officials at the Departments of Justice, Defense, State, and Homeland Security.

How might Americans feel if they knew that most of these 86 are now on a prolonged hunger strike and that many are being force-fed against their will, a notoriously painful, degrading and even illegal practice. Two weeks ago, 40 additional military medical personnel were sent to Guantanamo to assist with the force-feedings.

The American Medical Association has condemned such force-feedings as a violation of "core ethical values of the medical profession." The United Nations has condemned the practice as torture and a breach of international law.

Concerned Citizens

Friday's unusual "briefing" sprang from an initiative by a group of concerned citizens mostly from Moran's district in northern Virginia. On April 30, Kristine Huskey led a small group of us to meet with Moran, one of the very few members of Congress to speak out against the obscenity called Guantanamo. We put our shoulders to the wheel (and enlisted the willing shoulders of many other pro-justice people) and brought about the briefing in nine days.

C-Span filmed the entire hour and a half. You will not be at all bored if you tune in. And that goes in spades if the disinterest by the corporate media has left you wondering how it came about that America is fast losing its soul. You can find the video under the title, "Panel Holds Discussion on Guantanamo Detainees," May 10, 10:00-11:30 in Rayburn B-354. Participants included:

Pardiss Kebriaei, Esq. (Center for Constitutional Rights; attorney for several Guantanamo prisoners)

David Irvine, Esq. (Brig. Gen., USA ret., & Member, Constitution Project Task Force on Detainee Treatment)

Larry Wilkerson (Col., USA ret., & former State Department Chief of Staff)

Dr. George Hunsinger, (Professor, Princeton Theological Seminary, & founder, National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT));

Moderator Kristine Huskey, Esq., counsel on *Rasul v Bush* (2004) and *Boumediene v Bush* (2008): Adjunct Professor, Georgetown U. Law Center.

Toward the end of the Q & A (at 1:29:50), I asked why Bush administration lawyers such as Alberto Gonzales and David Addington have not been held accountable by the legal profession. Official documents released by the Bush administration show them to have been responsible for advising President George W. Bush to disregard international law, including the key Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions.

It occurred to me that three of the four panelists, plus Rep. Moran, moderator Huskey and former chief prosecutor at Guantanamo, Col. Morris Davis, USAF (ret.), who joined the panel when Moran had to leave after the first hour, are lawyers. The response I got was: "I'm not sure there's an answer to that."

In fairness, I need to point out that the panel had been under way for almost an hour and a half, and my question had already been described as "the last one." Still, I was left wondering: can it be true that there is no answer to that?

I thought of the many lawyers in my immediate family and especially of my father, Joseph W. McGovern, a long-time professor of law at Fordham University who loved the law as if the law itself were a member of our family. Dad also served for 14 years on the New York State Board of Regents including six years as Chancellor (1968-75), whose broad mandate included holding accountable professionals licensed to practice in the State of New York. I could sense him rolling over in his grave at the proposition that there is no answer to the question of holding the likes of Gonzales and Addington accountable.

Dad took particular pride in the principled way in which U.S. Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson prosecuted Nazi leaders after World War II at the Nuremberg Tribunals. Jackson said this about the purpose of Nuremberg: "We must make clear to the Germans that the wrong for which their fallen leaders are on trial is not that they lost the war, but that they started it."

The intent was to establish a precedent against aggressive war like, say, Iraq, just 57 years later. Jackson said: "Let me make clear that while this law is first applied against German aggressors, the law includes, and if it is to serve a useful purpose, it must condemn aggression by any other nations, including those which sit here now in judgment. ..."

"We are able to do away with domestic tyranny and violence and aggression by those in power against the rights of their own people only when we make all men

answerable to the law. This trial represents mankind's desperate effort to apply the discipline of the law to statesmen who have used their powers of state to attack the foundations of the world's peace and to commit aggression against the rights of their neighbors."

Including Lawyers?

On April 24, 1946, Nazi defendant Wilhelm Frick, for example, told the Tribunal, "I wanted things done legally. After all, I am a lawyer." Of course, not all laws are good things.

Frick drafted, signed and administered laws that suppressed trade unions and persecuted Jews (including the infamous Nuremberg Laws). He insisted he had drafted the Nuremberg Laws for "scientific reasons," to protect the purity of German blood. Frick also knew that the insane, aged and disabled ("useless eaters") were being systematically killed, but did nothing to stop it.

Frick was one of 11 defendants sentenced to death by the Nuremberg Tribunal. He was hanged on Oct. 16, 1946.

Lest I be misunderstood, I do not advocate capital punishment even for the likes of Gonzales and Addington. I simply want them held accountable, as their faux-lawyer Nazi counterparts were. Otherwise, we have made a liar out of Justice Jackson and made a mockery of the Nuremberg principles, which will be revealed as just another case of "victor's justice" despite Jackson's promises to the contrary.

I haven't a clue as to how the legal profession tries to hold lawyers accountable. But here I was among a group of fine lawyers: Pardiss Kebriaei, David Irvine, Kristine Huskey, Moe Davis and Jim Moran. Had they no idea either? Or were we just out of time.

Indeed, we as Americans may be running out of time in a moral sense and running out of time to spare innocent Guantanamo detainees from death. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. warned many years ago, "There is such a thing as too late."

Ringling in my ears was George W. Bush's response to a question by NBC's Matt Lauer on Nov. 8, 2010:

Lauer: Why is waterboarding legal, in your opinion?

Bush: Because the lawyer said it was legal. He said it did not fall within the anti-torture act. I'm not a lawyer. But you gotta trust the judgment of the people around you, and I do.

Are American lawyers going to let that kind of thing stand?

Ray McGovern works with Tell the Word, a publishing arm of the ecumenical Church of the Saviour in inner-city Washington. He was an Army infantry/intelligence officer and a CIA analyst for 30 years, and now serves on the Steering Group of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS).

Obama Shies from Iran Nuke Deal

Official Washington's ideology of "tough-guy-ism" has prevented a potential breakthrough in nuclear talks with Iran. Afraid of being called weak, President Obama has balked at accepting Iran's right to enrich uranium even at low levels and under international supervision, Flynt and Hillary Mann Leverett say.

By Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett

To maintain the illusion of some prospect for progress in nuclear diplomacy with Tehran, European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton will meet with Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, Saeed Jalili, in Istanbul next week. Purportedly, Ashton will see if the P5+1 dialogue with Iran can be put back on track after yet another round of nuclear talks with Iran failed last month.

Publicly, Western officials blame the failure either on the Islamic Republic's upcoming presidential election or on that old fallback, Iranian "intransigence." In reality, talks failed because America and its Western partners remain unwilling to recognize Iran's right to enrich uranium under international safeguards.

As a sovereign state, Iran is entitled to enrich, if it chooses; as a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), it is entitled to do so under safeguards. The NPT explicitly recognizes signatories' "inalienable right" to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. That this inalienable right includes the right to enrich is clear from the NPT itself, its negotiating history, and decades of state practice, with multiple non-weapons state parties having developed safeguarded fuel-cycle infrastructures potentially able to support weapons programs.

If Washington recognized Iran's right to enrich, a nuclear deal with Tehran could be reached in a matter of weeks. As long as Washington refuses to do this, no substantial agreement will be possible.

Yet the Obama administration is no closer than its predecessor to accepting safeguarded enrichment in Iran. This is partly due to pressure from various

allies, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Britain, France, and their American supporters, who expect Washington somehow to defy legal principle along with political reality and compel Tehran to surrender indigenous fuel-cycle capabilities.

But the real reason for U.S. obstinacy is that recognizing Iran's nuclear rights would mean accepting the Islamic Republic as a legitimate entity representing legitimate national interests. No American president since the Iranian Revolution, not even Barack Hussein Obama, has been willing to do this.

Washington's unwillingness is grounded in unattractive, but fundamental, aspects of American strategic culture: difficulty coming to terms with independent power centers (whether globally or in vital regions like the Middle East); hostility to non-liberal states, unless they subordinate their foreign policies to U.S. preferences (as Egypt did under Sadat and Mubarak); and an unreflective but deeply rooted sense that U.S.-backed norms, rules, and transnational decision-making processes are meant to constrain others, not America itself.

Because these attitudes are so fundamental, it is unlikely Obama will invest the political capital required to bring America's Iran policy in line with strategic reality before his presidency ends. And so the controversy over Iran's nuclear activities will grind on.

The world has experienced such diplomatic stasis before. In 2003-2005, Britain, France, and Germany worked (ostensibly) to prepare a nuclear settlement with Tehran; Iran suspended enrichment for nearly two years to encourage diplomatic progress. The initiative failed because the Bush administration refused to join the talks unless Tehran was willing to abandon pursuit of indigenous fuel-cycle capabilities.

In 2009-2010, efforts to negotiate the exchange of most of Iran's then-stockpile of enriched uranium for fuel for the Tehran Research Reactor collapsed for similar reasons. In the May 2010 Tehran Declaration brokered by Brazil and Turkey, Iran accepted all of Washington's terms for a fuel swap, yet the Obama administration rejected the Declaration because it openly recognized Iran's right to enrich. Three years later, the administration is once again undermining chances for diplomatic success with its inflexibility regarding Iran's nuclear rights.

The world has also seen what happens when America and its European partners demonstrate bad faith in nuclear diplomacy with Tehran, Iran expands its nuclear infrastructure and capabilities. When Iran broke its nearly two-year enrichment suspension in 2005, it could run less than a thousand centrifuges; today, it has installed 12,000 centrifuges, more than 9,000 of which process uranium gas to produce enriched uranium.

In February 2010, Iran began enriching uranium to the near-20 percent level needed to fuel the Tehran Research Reactor (TRR) after the United States and its partners refused to sell the fuel; Iran consistently offered to suspend near-20 percent enrichment if it could obtain an adequate fuel supply for the TRR. After Obama torpedoed the Tehran Declaration, Iran accelerated production of near-20 percent uranium and began indigenously manufacturing fuel plates for the TRR.

With America and its European partners once again blowing an opening to accept Tehran's nuclear rights and close a nuclear deal, we are likely to see another surge of nuclear expansion in Iran. Certainly Iran will continue enriching, at the 3-4 percent level needed for power reactors and at the near-20 percent level needed for the TRR, and installing more efficient centrifuges. Iran also plans to commission a heavy water reactor, perhaps as early as next year.

Although the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) consistently certifies that no nuclear materials have been diverted from safeguarded Iranian facilities, all of these steps will be cited by Israel, the pro-Israel lobby in Washington, and other U.S. constituencies hankering for military action as evidence that time for diplomacy has run out.

Additionally, the Islamic Republic may find legitimate reasons, for example, building maritime reactors, to begin enriching above 20 percent. While such higher-level enrichment would be done under IAEA safeguards, this would also be interpreted in America and Israel as provocative Iranian "escalation."

Obama would prefer to avoid another U.S.-initiated war in the Middle East; thus, he will keep endorsing ploys (like Ashton's trip to Istanbul) to maintain a façade of diplomatic "engagement." But his unwillingness to revive America's deteriorating regional position through serious diplomacy with Tehran will increase pressure on him to order U.S. strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities before his presidency's end.

Rather than openly abandon the delusion of U.S. hegemony in the Middle East, Obama will try to placate hawkish elements by escalating America's ongoing "dirty war" against the Islamic Republic, including economic warfare against civilians, threatening secondary sanctions against third countries in violation of U.S. WTO commitments, cyber-attacks, support for groups doing things inside Iran that Washington elsewhere condemns as "terrorism," stoking sectarian tensions, and fueling further violence in Syria to prevent Tehran from "winning" there.

But that, too, will only further destabilize the Middle East and bring America and Iran ever closer to overt confrontation.

Flynt Leverett served as a Middle East expert on George W. Bush's National Security Council staff until the Iraq War and worked previously at the State Department and at the Central Intelligence Agency. Hillary Mann Leverett was the NSC expert on Iran and from 2001 to 2003 was one of only a few U.S. diplomats authorized to negotiate with the Iranians over Afghanistan, al-Qaeda and Iraq. They are authors of the new book, *Going to Tehran*. Direct links to previous postings of this article:

<http://goingtotehran.com/what-u-s-failure-in-nuclear-diplomacy-with-iran-will-mean> ;

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/why-the-failure-in-almaty-is-a-big-deal/article4686641.ece?homepage=true>;

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/05/2013589151459212.html>

WPost Revives Its Plame-gate Smear

Exclusive: The Washington Post not only swallowed George W. Bush's lies about Iraq's WMD but the neocon newspaper spat on Americans who dared challenge those lies, especially ex-U.S. Ambassador Joseph Wilson and his CIA wife, Valerie Plame. A top Post editor has now revived that abuse, notes Robert Parry.

By Robert Parry

Sometimes it seems that the humane thing to do with the Washington Post would be to counsel it on the advantages of corporate euthanasia. Then, with its faded glories of Watergate clutched to its chest, it could disappear from its embarrassing present in which the newspaper is disgracing whatever good it did in the past.

Yes, I know you could argue that even its Watergate fame was way overrated, that the newspaper missed the most important aspect of the scandal how it originated with President Richard Nixon's frantic search for a missing file that documented his sabotage of the 1968 Vietnam peace talks, what President Lyndon Johnson privately had termed Nixon's "treason."

The Post's misguided focus on the Watergate cover-up, rather than on the far more grievous underlying crime of extending the Vietnam War for four years, led to one of Official Washington's silliest sayings: "the cover-up is worse than the crime." [For details on the origins of Watergate, see Robert Parry's *America's Stolen Narrative*.]

But at least with Watergate, the Post's editors along with reporters Bob

Woodward and Carl Bernstein could be credited with keeping the pressure on so Nixon would face some accountability, a humiliating resignation. In effect, the Post helped nail this treacherous war criminal even if it was a bit like jailing Al Capone for tax evasion.

That, however, was then, not now. Over the past few decades, the Washington Post seems to have gotten nearly every big story wrong, most tragically the invasion of Iraq which the Post promoted on its editorial pages and failed to question in its news pages. Then, even as George W. Bush's phony WMD case was collapsing, the Post turned its guns on former U.S. Ambassador Joseph Wilson for having the courage to explode one of Bush's central lies.

Rather than show any journalistic integrity regarding its own massive failure to question the WMD case for war, the Post published a Robert Novak column that exposed Wilson's wife, Valerie Plame, as an undercover CIA officer, thus destroying her career. But even that wasn't enough. The Post's editorial board spent the next several years repeating every ugly Republican talking point aimed at tearing down Wilson.

The key takeaway from the so-called Plame-gate Affair should have been that Wilson was correct in his description of his efforts in 2002, that he along with other U.S. representatives investigated and debunked one of Vice President Dick Cheney's suspicions about Iraq trying to buy yellowcake uranium from Niger.

Yet, despite the U.S. intelligence community's consensus that the Niger suspicions were false, President Bush shoehorned the allegation into his 2003 State of the Union speech as the so-called "sixteen words": "The British Government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa."

Speaking Truth to Power

After Bush's speech, Wilson revealed, accurately, that the U.S. government knew those suspicions to be false. Wilson was also right when he complained that his truth-telling prompted a counterattack by the Bush administration to discredit him, which included leaking to the press the fact that his wife was a covert CIA officer involved with proliferation issues (and whose office dispatched Wilson on the mission to Niger).

So, here was a public servant who had undertaken a difficult assignment to Niger and who tried to warn the U.S. government away from some bad information. Then, when President Bush tried to deceive the American people anyway, Wilson had the courage and integrity to get the real information to the public.

You might have thought that the Washington Post would want to defend such a

person. Instead, the Post went to extraordinary lengths to disparage Wilson while Bush was still in office and has continued that ugly campaign literally to this day. In an op-ed column on Monday, the Post's deputy editorial-page editor Jackson Diehl reprised the smears against Wilson in the context of discussing the Benghazi case.

With sarcasm dripping from his words, Diehl wrote: "Remember the scandal of 'the 16 words'? If you do, you've probably been inside the Beltway too long, literally or figuratively. If not, the quick version is this: A former ambassador named Joseph C. Wilson IV charged in 2003 that President George W. Bush had included in his State of the Union address a (16-word) allegation about Iraq that his top aides knew to be false, that Saddam Hussein had sought to purchase uranium from Niger.

"Wilson then amped up the ensuing partisan uproar by claiming there had been a White House conspiracy to punish him by deliberately blowing the cover of his CIA wife. Most of what Wilson said was later proved to be grossly exaggerated, or simply false. But that didn't stop Democrats and partisan media from devoting years to conspiracy-spinning and attempts to pin political and criminal responsibility on Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney or Karl Rove. Blustered Wilson: 'It's of keen interest to me to see whether or not we can get Karl Rove frog-marched out of the White House in handcuffs.'"

To buttress this renewed assault on Wilson, Diehl linked in the Post's online edition to one of the quibbling editorials that he and his colleagues had published to disparage Wilson years ago. So, Wilson, a private citizen who was doing his civic duty both for the government and as a whistleblower for the public, was torn down and humiliated by the Washington Post for speaking truth to power.

Accountability at the Post?

But what, you might ask, happened to the Post editorialists who got snookered by Bush's false WMD claims and helped bamboozle the nation into a disastrous and illegal war? Well, the answer is nothing.

Fred Hiatt and Jackson Diehl remain on the Post's masthead as editorial-page editor and deputy editor, respectively, just as they did when they were flogging the Iraq War. They and other key news executives at the Washington Post faced no accountability for getting fooled about WMD and serving as propagandists for an aggressive war.

As disgraceful as that may seem to people who actually care about journalism, the Post's malfeasance has been compounded by the fact that no one at the

newspaper apparently sees anything wrong with continuing the Hiatt-Diehl obsession to destroy Joseph Wilson, whose family has already suffered enough for his attempt to set the factual record straight.

It also speaks volumes about the disappearing journalistic standards of the Washington Post that the newspaper would allow its deputy editorial-page editor to lead off a column by making fun of anyone who bothers to remember the circumstances behind the terrible Iraq War. Diehl may find it uproarious for some people to remember the fraud of Bush's 16 words, but it is far more laughable in a very dark way that Diehl is still employed in a position of responsibility inside a news organization.

At this stage, however, the pattern of journalistic misconduct at the Washington Post has been so consistent for so long that the blame cannot be placed at the feet of a few editors. The entire newspaper is a disgrace to the principles of American journalism. [For more details on this topic, see Consortiumnews.com's "[Why WPost's Hiatt Should Be Fired.](#)"]

Investigative reporter Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories for The Associated Press and Newsweek in the 1980s. You can buy his new book, *America's Stolen Narrative*, either in [print here](#) or as an e-book (from [Amazon](#) and [barnesandnoble.com](#)).

Unleashing Dogs of Aggressive War

After World War II, U.S. prosecutors at the Nuremberg Tribunals deemed aggressive war the "supreme international crime" because it unpacked all the other evils of war. But Official Washington now treats U.S. invasions of "enemy" states as a topic for casual political discourse, as ex-CIA analyst Paul R. Pillar notes.

By Paul R. Pillar

Amid much talk lately about "red lines", to the point that the term would be a strong candidate for cliché of the year, we should reflect on the relative inattention, as [Richard Falk points out in a recent commentary](#), to what used to be one of the most fundamental and important red lines of all.

The line in question, which Falk notes the United States once played a leading role in formulating, is "the prohibition of the use of international force by states other than in cases of self-defense against a prior armed attack."

Falk has been around long enough to rile adversaries on many issues about which he has been outspoken (and I have disagreed with some of his past positions). It was nearly 40 years ago that I took a graduate course in international law from him, and he is now in his 80s. But he does speak some uncomfortable truths.

Many he has spoken in connection with his current function as the United Nations special rapporteur on human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories. Most recently he incurred irresponsible vitriol, including some from U.S. officials, when he noted, accurately, that U.S. policies have something to do with stimulating the kind of violent extremism exhibited by the Boston Marathon bombers.

His observation about disregard for the once-prominent norm against aggression gets to another set of truths. Erosion of respect for this norm, specifically in discussions of U.S. policy, is a recent phenomenon. Throughout the Twentieth Century the United States largely observed it, and as far as significant warfare is concerned rigorously observed it.

Moreover, the United States expended much blood and treasure in campaigns that, whatever other U.S. interests they may have served, were responses to someone else's aggression and ensured that the aggression would not be allowed to stand. World War II was the largest such effort; Korea in 1950 and Kuwait in 1990-91 were others. The U.S. response to the Anglo-French-Israeli attack on Egypt in 1956 was an example of upholding the norm of non-aggression even when it meant opposing close allies.

The big departure that led the United States astray from this path was the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the first significant U.S. war of aggression since the Nineteenth Century. Despite the costly unpleasantness that followed the invasion, this episode seems to have had a lasting effect on American debate in extending the range of respectable policy options to include ones that earlier would have been ruled out as being beyond the red line of non-aggression.

Most Americans of just a couple of decades ago, even after the Soviet Union imploded, would have been taken aback by how much some beyond-the-line possibilities, such as an unprovoked attack on Iran, are deemed respectable enough to be seriously considered today.

Falk does not discuss non-aggression in absolute terms. He suggests that in individual cases other considerations, such as humanitarian ones, often appropriately come into play. He also appears to accept the frequently-advanced (though not necessarily valid) idea that we are living in an era in which the ubiquity of terrorism means some rules of international conduct need to be revised.

His principal lament is that the rule of non-aggression is not being carefully updated but instead simply abandoned. That, he says, means “normative chaos,” which “in a world where already nine countries possess nuclear weapons seems like a prescription for species suicide.”

That’s probably putting the point too strongly, but such a world is nonetheless not in U.S. interests. The United States, despite (and as the Iraq War experience suggests, perhaps even because of) its standing as the militarily most powerful state, has more to lose than to gain in such a world.

Restoring, respecting, and fostering a norm of non-aggression is in the interest of the United States even if one does not approach the subject, as Falk does, with an emphasis on international organizations and international law. Even the most hard-boiled realist, focused like a laser on U.S. national interests, can see the benefit to the United States of having such a norm.

This leads to part of an answer to the question that Danielle Pletka posed and Jacob Heilbrunn highlighted as a fair question to realists: what do they want, as distinct from what are they against? They ought to want a world in which states do not start wars whenever and wherever they feel like it.

Paul R. Pillar, in his 28 years at the Central Intelligence Agency, rose to be one of the agency’s top analysts. He is now a visiting professor at Georgetown University for security studies. (This article first appeared as a blog post at The National Interest’s Web site. Reprinted with author’s permission.)
