

Consortiumnews' Spring Fund Goal: \$25,000

From Editor Robert Parry: Though it doesn't feel like spring in much of the United States, we are starting our spring fund drive with a target of \$25,000 to keep Consortiumnews.com alive. And we are offering a special thank-you package for readers who donate \$100 or more.

Of course, we appreciate any size donations that you can afford to help sustain our independent journalism. You can use a [credit card online](#) (we accept Visa, Mastercard or Discover) or you can [mail a check](#) to Consortium for Independent Journalism (CIJ); 2200 Wilson Blvd., Suite 102-231; Arlington VA 22201. For readers wanting to use PayPal, you can address contributions to our account, which is named after our e-mail address: "consortnew@aol.com". (Since we are a 501-c-3 non-profit, your donations may be tax-deductible.)

As for the special thank-you package, anyone who [donates](#) \$100 or more or has set up a [recurring donation](#) with that annual total qualifies for the gift: a DVD of the 1991 Frontline documentary, "Election Held Hostage," which examines whether Ronald Reagan's campaign exploited the 1980 Iran hostage crisis to win the presidency, **plus** a signed copy of my latest book, *America's Stolen Narrative*, which provides the latest documentary evidence on that Republican skullduggery.

The book also reveals long-hidden records that I discovered in the National Archives exposing the immediate historical precedent, Richard Nixon's sabotage of Vietnam War peace talks to ensure his election over Hubert Humphrey in 1968.

If you wish to get this thank-you gift, just send us a follow-up e-mail to consortnew@aol.com with your precise mailing instructions. If you prefer a different one of my books to accompany the DVD such as *Lost History, Secrecy & Privilege* or *Neck Deep* (co-authored with Sam and Nat Parry) just say so in the e-mail. We'll make the change.

Also, to help reach our \$25,000 target, we will continue offering my three-book trilogy on the Bush dynasty *Secrecy & Privilege, Neck Deep* and *America's Stolen Narrative* for the discount price of only \$34, less than half the cover price. To get this special offer, just go to Consortiumnews.com's "[Donate](#)" button and make a \$34 "donation" using Visa, Mastercard or Discover. We will read a "donation" of that amount as an order for the trilogy. If your mailing address is the same as your credit card billing address, we will ship the books to that address. If your mailing address is different, just send us an e-mail at consortnew@aol.com and we will make the adjustment.

You can also take advantage of this trilogy offer by mailing a check for \$34 to The Media Consortium; 2200 Wilson Blvd.; Suite 102-231; Arlington VA 22201. Or you can use our Paypal account, "consortnew @ aol.com." Just make sure you include your mailing address in the message.

For U.S. orders of the trilogy, we will pay for the shipping. (Regrettably, this offer can only be made for U.S. orders because of increased international postal rates.)

Another way to help keep Consortiumnews.com going is to buy one of my last four books through the [Consortiumnews' Web site](#) or my latest book, *America's Stolen Narrative*, through Amazon.com, either [in paper](#) or the [e-book version](#). A portion of the sales will go to support our independent journalism.

And, we can now accept donations of stock or other equities, which I'm told can offer a tax advantage to donors if the stock has appreciated in value since it was purchased. (Our 18-year-old journalism project is recognized by the IRS as a 501-c-3 non-profit, meaning that contributions may be tax-deductible.)

If this stock-donation option appeals to you, I suggest you discuss it with your broker and then contact me at consortnew@aol.com for specific instructions on how to transfer the stock. Or you can write to us at Consortium for Independent Journalism (CIJ); 2200 Wilson Blvd., Suite 102-231; Arlington VA 22201.

Again, thanks for your support and for making our 18-plus years of honest journalism possible.

Robert Parry is a longtime investigative reporter who broke many of the Iran-Contra stories for the Associated Press and Newsweek in the 1980s. He founded Consortiumnews.com in 1995 to create an outlet for well-reported journalism that was being squeezed out of an increasingly trivialized U.S. news media.

In Case You Missed...

Some of our special stories in February focused on the good and the bad of past U.S. presidents – and on the resurgence of the neocons as they seek new wars in the Middle East and provoked a U.S.-Russia confrontation over Ukraine.

["Neocons Seek New Ultimatum on Syria"](#) by Robert Parry, Feb. 2, 2014.

["Hugo Chavez's Legacy at Risk"](#) by Andres Cala, Feb. 4, 2014.

["Fear Itself: Democrats Duck FDR's Lessons"](#) by Beverly Bandler, Feb. 4, 2014.

["Big Media Again Pumps for Mideast Wars"](#) by Robert Parry, Feb. 4, 2014.

["When the CIA's Empire Struck Back"](#) by Lisa Pease, Feb. 6, 2014.

["Shameful History of Jeff Davis Highway"](#) by Robert Parry, Feb. 7, 2014.

["Israeli Rabbis Warn Kerry of God's Wrath"](#) by Robert Parry, Feb. 7, 2014.

["Is Hillary Clinton a Neocon-Lite?"](#) by Robert Parry, Feb. 10, 2014.

["Hectoring Obama Over Syria"](#) by Paul R. Pillar, Feb. 13, 2014.

["Tea Party and Thomas Jefferson"](#) by Robert Parry, Feb. 13, 2014.

["Obama Deflects Neocon Pressure on Syria"](#) by Robert Parry, Feb. 14, 2014.

["Syria at the Edge of 'Shock Doctrine'"](#) by Rob Prince, Feb. 15, 2014.

["Does Nixon's 'Treason' Boost LBJ's Legacy"](#) by Robert Parry, Feb. 16, 2014.

["Cuba Inches Toward New Future"](#) by Andres Cala, Feb. 17, 2014.

["The Best and Worst US Presidents"](#) by Robert Parry, Feb. 18, 2014.

["How GOP Sabotaged a Union Vote"](#) by Stephen Crockett, Feb. 20, 2014.

["Hillary Clinton's Unlearned Lessons"](#) by Robert Parry, Feb. 20, 2014.

["Oklahoma as Vanguard of the Right"](#) by Richard L. Fricker, Feb. 21, 2014.

["Seeing Evil in the New Russia"](#) by Danny Schechter, Feb. 23, 2014.

["Neocons and the Ukraine Coup"](#) by Robert Parry, Feb. 23, 2014.

["Six Decades of H-Bomb Cover-ups"](#) by Beverly Deepe Kever, Feb. 24, 2014.

["A New Neocon Push for Syrian War"](#) by Coleen Rowley, Feb. 24, 2014.

["Cheering a 'Democratic' Coup in Ukraine"](#) by Robert Parry, Feb. 26, 2014.

["A Shadow US Foreign Policy"](#) by Robert Parry, Feb. 27, 2014.

To produce and publish these stories and many more costs money. And except for some book sales, we depend on the generous support of our readers.

So, please consider a tax-deductible donation either by [credit card online](#) or by [mailing a check](#). (For readers wanting to use PayPal, you can address contributions to our account, which is named "consortnew@aol.com").

Tolerating Saudi Arabia's Intolerance

The U.S. government insists that it abides by principles of international law, democracy and respect for national sovereignty, but its actions often belie its words, with the U.S. support for Saudi Arabia's monarchy a stark example of the hypocrisy, writes Lawrence Davidson.

By Lawrence Davidson

Saudi Arabia is one of a handful of Middle East anachronisms: a family-based monarchy that believes it sits at the right hand of God. The Saud clan that rules in Saudi Arabia is both insular and fanatic. It is devoted to the Wahhabi sect of Sunni Islam, perhaps the most strict and intolerant manifestation of the religion.

Except for the religious details, there is really not much difference between the respective outlooks of a Wahhabi true believer, a hard-core Christian fundamentalist, and the Jewish extremists in Israel.

Like their Christian counterparts, the Saudis are proselytizers who spend huge sums every year supporting fanatical preachers pushing their message in far-flung parts of the world. And, like their Jewish counterparts, the Saudis have an army equipped with more advanced American weapons than they know what to do with. This, if you will, mechanizes their fanaticism.

Recently, there are suggestions that this is indeed the case. In 2011 the Saudi monarchy came to the rescue of another Middle East anachronism, the Sunni Al-Khalifa family monarchy in Bahrain. The Al-Khalifa were in trouble because for decades they had been systematically discriminating against the country's Shiite Muslim majority until, in the atmosphere of the short-lived Arab Spring, the Bahraini Shias decided to stand up and demand a bit of democracy for their homeland.

When the Bahraini police, mostly imported from Pakistan, could not handle the evolving situation, the Al-Khalifa called in U.S.-armed Saudi troops to put an end to any hopes of a better, more democratic Bahrain. Even though the Saudi incursion violated the U.S. Arms Export Control Act, there was no protest from Washington.

In the meantime, the Saudis have also been busy funneling money and weapons to

the Sunni opposition in places like Iraq and Syria. You might not like the governments in Baghdad and Damascus, but the groups the Saudis are underwriting are often worse.

Be they the suicide car-bombers of Iraq or the self-proclaimed Al-Qaeda affiliates in Syria, Saudi money, both private and government funds, along with the guns they buy, have been making their way into the hands of people who seemed to have the same callous disregard of non-combatant life and limb as do, well, the guys who operate U.S. drones in Yemen.

There have been repeated protests about this sort of Saudi behavior. The Russians have complained about it in relation to Syria, and the Iraqi government has directly accused the Saudis of sponsoring terrorism in their country. Has this given any pause to the zealots in Riyadh? No, it has not, because, like the Israelis, they know that they have God on their side and, ultimately, Washington D.C. as well.

Now the Saudis have turned their bullying ways toward their neighbor Qatar. In early March, the Saudi foreign minister declared that Riyadh would “blockade Qatar by land and sea” unless that country ceases its support for the Muslim Brotherhood, a mostly non-violent Muslim organization that the Saudis have illogically designated a “terrorist” group probably because the Brotherhood proselytizes a rival interpretation of Islam and has been outlawed by the Egyptian military dictatorship, which is an ally of Saudi Arabia.

The Saudis also want Qatar to close down Al Jazeera and evict several U.S.-based research organizations with offices in Doha because they have all been critical of Riyadh. Considering that most of Qatar’s fresh food comes across its only land border with Saudi Arabia, the threat must be taken seriously.

Lack of U.S. Response

There is no indication that the United States will stand by relatively liberal Qatar any more than it supported the democracy advocates in Bahrain. As far as Washington is concerned, the oil that comes out of Saudi Arabia to America’s trading partners (not much of it comes to the U.S.) is more important than the independent broadcasting of Al Jazeera, the American research centers and, without a doubt, the ideology of democracy.

And it is the Saudi monarchy that keeps the oil flowing. Thus, despite some complaining, the U.S. acquiesces in the behavior of the Saudi fanatics, just as it does with the Israelis.

This means that Washington can sanction the Russians for protecting their security interests and the Russian-speaking population in the Crimea. They can

sanction the Iranians for developing nuclear energy. And, they can acquiesce in the utter destitution of 1.76 million Gazans. But you will hear no talk of sanctions due to Saudi aggression or its sponsorship of terrorism.

At present the Saudis and Israelis are acting in unlikely unison on a range of issues such as support for Egypt's military dictatorship. This makes them strange bedfellows. What can they possibly have in common?

Well, besides adhering to arrogant and aggressive notions of manifest destiny, they both fear democracy in the Middle East. And, believe it or not, we can make the duo into a trio by adding the United States. Why should all three governments fear democracy? It's really very simple.

What often happens when there are free and fair elections in that region of the world? One gets leaders and governments that are (1) almost by definition wary of monarchies and other forms of dictatorship, (2) anti-American, because Washington is an historic supporter of Middle East dictators, (3) pro-Muslim, but not receptive to the strict Wahhabi or Salafi versions of Islam, and (4) more active in their support for the Palestinian people.

At this point, these strange bedfellows are having their way. The Arab Spring and its aspirations of a more tolerant and democratic Middle East are, with the possible exception of Tunisia, rapidly fading memories. In its place we have the fanatics: the military style in Egypt, the religious style in Saudi Arabia, and an aggressive mixture of the two in Israel.

And what about the U.S.? Well, its style is to arm fanatics and dictators and then preach democracy. In Washington, the name of the game is hypocrisy.

Lawrence Davidson is a history professor at West Chester University in Pennsylvania. He is the author of *Foreign Policy Inc.: Privatizing America's National Interest*; *America's Palestine: Popular and Official Perceptions from Balfour to Israeli Statehood*; and *Islamic Fundamentalism*.

The Pampered, Delusional Rich

America's rich, who are consolidating more and more of the nation's wealth in their own hands and giving less and less back, see themselves as "victims" of class envy, and some billionaires even liken their plight to the Holocaust, a stunning deviation from reality, notes Michael Winship.

By Michael Winship

Here on our whimsical island off the coast of the Eastern Seaboard, we have a company called Manhattan Mini Storage that is as famous for the semi-snarky wit of its billboards and subway posters as it is for the spaces it rents to us New Yorkers who live in apartments so small the mice are stoop-shouldered.

The sacrifice we make for living here is that we have no room for all our stuff; this storage facility exists to bridge the gap by renting out the urban equivalent of an attic or cellar where we can stash our junk until our next move, new relationship or death.

Some of its advertising addresses this problem directly "Your closet's tinier than a runway model's lunch," one read a couple of years ago; "When he's a keeper but his stuff isn't," was another favorite. Yet most of the notoriety the firm's ads have achieved has little to do with their product and much to do with pride of place and politics.

"NYC: Tolerant of your beliefs, judgmental of your shoes," is a New York state of mind that even those of us who favor sneakers and loafers over Louboutins can get behind. Others are more candidate-specific. "Rick Perry: The voice in your head is not God," said what a lot of us were thinking and, "If Mitt had storage, he'd be able to find his tax returns," actually does manage to deftly combine product placement with a point of view.

But their current ad really catches the eye: "The French aristocracy never saw it coming either."

"It," of course, is a revolt of the 99 percent, the thought of which seems to have elements of the one percent so freaked out they can barely choke down their Salon Blanc de Blanc. But apparently, whenever the American elite contemplate the possibility of open rebellion against income inequality it's not peasants storming the Bastille at the start of the French Revolution that they see it's Nazis jackbooting into mansions and searching the premises for yacht owners.

How else to explain venture capitalist Tom Perkins's infamous comparison of what he called "progressive war" to Kristallnacht? And now we have Home Depot tycoon Ken Langone telling *Politico.com* that as far as populist sentiment goes, "I hope it's not working, because if you go back to 1933, with different words, this is what Hitler was saying in Germany. You don't survive as a society if you encourage and thrive on envy or jealousy."

Langone subsequently has apologized sort of. So did Perkins sort of. But the foul deed is done, the smear is smeared and it won't be the last time this particular straw dog barks. Because a lot of the time, it works.

Nor will this envy and jealousy meme disappear any time soon because it, too,

seems to have captured the imagination of the plutocracy. "It's safe to conclude that a national shift toward envy would be toxic for American culture," Arthur C. Brooks, president of the conservative American Enterprise Institute wrote in the March 2 edition of *The New York Times*.

Indeed such envy might do just that, but beyond Internet trolls and covetous cranks, where is it? As the headline of Jonathan Chait's recent story in *New York* magazine notes, vast public envy is an "imaginary epidemic." The closest we have come politically, he writes, "was a brief upsurge in populist anger for a short period of 2009, following news reports of bonuses handed out to employees at bailout recipient AIG.

"The House of Representatives (by a vote of 328 to 93) passed a 90-percent tax on those bonuses. But the Obama administration opposed the bill, the Senate forgot about it, and the moment passed. It's notable that even this small, ultimately ineffectual moment did not rise from any generalized spate of envy but specific resentment against the use of tax dollars to reward failure."

What's handy about making accusations of envy or jealousy is that it doesn't have to reflect badly on you, the accuser. Hey, it can't be helped if people are resentful your success is your own and why should there be apologies for making something of yourself? Thus, victimhood becomes the whine du jour of the superrich it goes well with everything.

"The politics of envy are the wrong politics in America," Wall Street shill and former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers proclaimed to *Politico*. "The better politics are the politics of inclusion where everyone shares in economic growth."

There it is the sound of the other shoe dropping. Because the second half of the argument goes that instead of being jealous, we all should be working in harmony together to create jobs and opportunity. Problem is, the deeply rich talk about building the economy but do almost nothing about it. There's a lot of take and a lot of keep, but not much giving back.

Open the Books, a new non-profit working for greater transparency in government spending, reports that between 2000 and 2012, *Fortune* magazine's top 100 companies received \$1.2 trillion from the Feds. And, Aaron Cantu writes at *AlterNet.org* "That doesn't include all the billions of dollars doled out to housing, auto and banking enterprises in 2008-2009, nor does it include ethanol subsidies to agribusiness or tax breaks for wind turbine makers."

Investigative journalist David Cay Johnston reports big business hoarding money as if they were hiding cash in a mattress: "Uncle Sam spent \$3.5 trillion in

fiscal 2013. Corporations hold liquid assets equal to all the money the federal government spent that year plus 2012 and three months of 2011.

“The total corporate cash reserve amounts to almost \$25,000 per American, up from \$13,000 per American in 1994 (again after adjusting for inflation). And this cash is highly concentrated, most of it held by the 2,800 biggest companies, IRS data shows.

“Since 1994, liquid assets have grown at about six times sales, my analysis of the official data shows. When liquid assets grow six times faster than revenues, it tells you that companies are hoarding cash, not investing or spending.”

Richard Rubin at *Bloomberg News* recently found that, “The largest US-based companies added \$206 billion to their stockpiles of offshore profits last year, parking earnings in low-tax countries until Congress gives them a reason not to. The multinational companies have accumulated \$1.95 trillion outside the US, up 11.8 percent from a year earlier.”

Alan Pyke at the website *ThinkProgress* adds, “While precise estimates of lost revenue are difficult to make, previous inquiries into profit offshoring found that it cost the U.S. between \$30 billion and \$90 billion each year during the early and middle 2000s, when the pile of untaxed corporate profits was much smaller.

“States and localities also lose out on tens of billions of dollars in tax revenue each year to similar offshoring strategies. A recent study found that by closing just one small loophole in state business tax laws, states could bring in a billion dollars in new revenue almost overnight.”

Think of the highways, bridges and housing that money could build or repair, and the jobs that could be created, the teachers and tuitions it could provide, the mouths it could feed. Then throw in corporate malfeasance without punishment, gross mismanagement and exorbitant executive salaries for example, Henrique de Castro, the failed #2 at Yahoo, who’s getting \$109 million for his 15 disastrous months there, or about \$244,000 per day (h/t to R.J. Eskow).

Anger about these salient facts is simply common sense. And income inequality is all too real. But we’re not jealous or anti-money. As Mark Twain wrote, “I am opposed to millionaires, but it would be dangerous to offer me the position.”

So try to change your tune, plutocrats. Contrary to your fantasies, we are plagued by reality, not envy. Unless you live here in Manhattan and have a lot of closet space. Then we need to talk.

Michael Winship, a senior writing fellow at the public policy and advocacy group

Demos, is senior writer of the weekly public television series, Moyers & Company. To comment and for more information, go to www.BillMoyers.com. At Twitter, follow @MichaelWinship
