

Reform Judaism's Israeli Critique

Israel's nearly seven decades of repressing Palestinians has soured many ethical Jews on the idea that the Jewish state should get unqualified support for its behavior, including now Rabbi Rick Jacobs, the leader of U.S. Reform Judaism, as Lawrence Davidson describes.

By Lawrence Davidson

Something significant recently happened in the ongoing political-ethical drama that grips Israel and, by extension, Jewish communities worldwide. As reported by the *Jewish Daily Forward* on Nov. 6, Rabbi Rick Jacobs, the president of the Union for Reform Judaism (a position that makes him the leader of the largest Jewish denomination in the United States), publicly broke with Israel's political and religious leadership.

In a major speech at the Union's biennial conference he said, "Asking Jews around the world only to wave the flag of Israel and to support even the most misguided policies of its leaders drives a wedge between the Jewish soul and the Jewish state."

Going public in this fashion is significant and welcome. However, as we shall see, this aspect of his critique has a long history.

Jacobs then got more specific: "the treatment of Israel's minorities" and the "way ultra-Orthodox views of Judaism are being enshrined in secular law" are indications that Israeli society is "broken" and that Reform Jews will not be quiet about this.

Jacobs offers the concept of *Tikkun olam* or "good works that benefit the wider community" and the "power and wisdom of pluralism" as antidotes that can help "repair" Israel. This is potentially powerful stuff for the situation here in the U.S., if not in Israel itself.

If Jacobs moves to mobilize America's Reform Jews behind a campaign opposing present Israeli behavior, it will constitute a major challenge to Zionist tribalism. It might also help liberate the U.S. Congress from its present role of accomplice to Israeli crimes.

Past as Prologue

While the Zionists will never admit it and it is unlikely that the great majority of Reform Jews are aware of it, Rabbi Jacobs's criticism is not new. Indeed, warnings and skepticism of what Zionism meant for the Jews and Judaism go back to the late Nineteenth Century and intensified with the announcement of

the Balfour Declaration in 1917.

I wrote a long essay on this subject in 2004. It is entitled "Zionism and the Attack on Jewish Values" and appeared in the online journal of ideas *Logos* (Vol. 3, No. 2, Spring 2004). Here are some excerpts:

,Ahad Ha-am (the pen name of the famous Jewish moralist Asher Ginzberg) noted as early as 1891 that Zionist settlers in Palestine had "an inclination to despotism. They treat the Arabs with hostility and cruelty, deprive them of their rights, offend them without cause, and even boast of these deeds; and no one among us opposes this despicable and dangerous inclination."

,In England, on May 24, 1917, the Joint Foreign Committee of two Jewish organizations, the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Anglo-Jewish Association, issued a statement which asserted, "the feature of the Zionist program objected to proposes to invest Jewish settlers in Palestine with special rights over others. This would prove a calamity to the whole Jewish people who hold that the principle of equal rights for all denominations is essential. The [Zionist program] is all the more inadmissible because it might involve them in most bitter feuds with their neighbors of other races and religion."

,Hannah Arendt, one of the most insightful Jewish political philosophers of the Twentieth Century, characterized the Zionist movement in a 1945 essay as a "German-inspired nationalism." The result of this was a modern form of tribal ethnocentrism that led to virulent, politicized racism. In 1948, she and 27 other prominent Jews living in the United States wrote a letter to the *New York Times* condemning the growth of right-wing political influences in the newly founded Israeli state.

,Toward the end of his life, Albert Einstein warned that "the attitude we adopt toward the Arab minority will provide the real test of our moral standards as a people." An investigation of the conclusions drawn by every human rights organization that has examined Israeli behavior toward the Palestinians over the last 50 years, leaves no doubt that the Zionists have failed Einstein's test.

Yet that is just the conclusion that today's Zionists cannot face. Any revival of these early and prescient objections as part of a contemporary critique of Zionism represents, to the ardent Zionist, the promotion of supposedly traitorous anachronisms that are not only an embarrassment, but also politically dangerous.

Jews who express such concerns are systematically denigrated and non-Jews who are critical of Zionism are slandered with charges of anti-Semitism.

Judaism Divided

Thus, Rabbi Rick Jacobs is the latest in a long line of important critics. Now that he has joined their ranks, the question is: Will Jacobs be able to popularize his critique while withstanding the enormous pressure that is certainly about to befall him?

He will be libeled and threatened in an effort to force him to back down. The movement of Reform Judaism might itself come under fire as subversive. After all, officially Israel doesn't even see Reform Jewry as real Jews.

Though an effort to discredit Jacobs and the Reform movement will be made, it will only make matters worse for the Zionists and Israel. Thanks to its racist policies and brutal aggressiveness, the Zionist state has become the most divisive issue for Jews throughout the Western world. Jacobs's pronouncement is a sure sign of this. A Zionist counterattack on Reform Jewry will make it more so.

The truth is that Zionism has always divided Jews. On one side have been those sensitive to humanitarian issues and the religion's traditional championship of egalitarianism and justice. And on the other side have been those who have committed themselves to a Jewish future defined in Zionist ideological terms.

Before World War II those on the humanitarian side were mainly outspoken intellectuals. At that time the Zionists were better organized than those who opposed them and they were politically savvy and assertive. However, apart from areas of Eastern Europe, the vast majority of ordinary Jews remained neutral. With the advent of Nazi persecution the entire balance shifted in favor of the Zionists, who saw vindication for their statist philosophy in the Holocaust. By 1948, few Jews said a word against Zionism and the state of Israel.

But that pro-Zionist balance could not last. Eventually Israel's combining of religion and state power produced the worst of both worlds. In the name of defending Judaism, Israel has conquered, persecuted and massacred, and it has self-righteously refused to acknowledge its own culpability for the ongoing tragedy of both itself and its victims. Now, more and more Jews are disgusted and alienated, or just mightily confused, by the ongoing malfeasance of a movement that was supposed to create their ultimate safe haven.

As the journalist Laurie Goodstein noted in a Sept. 22, 2014 article in the international edition of the *New York Times*, ever greater numbers of younger American Jews are turning against Zionism and Israel. However, older and more conservative Jews still remain ardent Zionists. These are the big donors not only at their local congregational level, but also when it comes to politics.

They will continue to try to intimidate Jewish skeptics into silence and to sway members of Congress. Hopefully, the efforts of men like Rabbi Jacobs will make it easier for those Jews who support more progressive and humane policies to stand up and compete for influence.

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*.

Baiting Obama to 'Shock and Awe'

Official Washington's armchair warriors are pounding their drums again, demanding a larger U.S. invasion of Syria and decrying President Obama as "feckless" for showing some restraint. But these hawks offer little thinking about the consequences of another long-term occupation, says ex-CIA analyst Paul R. Pillar.

By Paul R. Pillar

President Barack Obama has repeatedly made adjustments to what he probably considered privately to have been the best U.S. policy toward armed conflicts overseas, as he has had to cope with the pressures from public discourse in Washington, to count his available political capital, and to decide which political battles to fight at home while also deciding which military battles the United States should fight abroad.

He has adjusted too much in the view of some of his critics on the left, who have not been happy about the extension of the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan or the reinsertion of some U.S. troops into Iraq. Far louder criticism, however, has come from the opposite direction and has called for more, not less, use of military force in foreign conflicts, especially conflicts in the Middle East.

This latter criticism is partly a matter of the usual reflexive rhetorical attacks with a heavy partisan tinge, which seem to have become especially habitual when aimed at the current president. But there is an additional dynamic that comes into play no matter who is in the White House and that produces a bias in the Washington discourse in favor of more rather than less use of military force, notwithstanding the notice that may be taken from time to time of the public's lack of appetite for getting involved in another costly ground

war.

This dynamic partly comes out of the tendency to look at any problem overseas as not only a U.S. problem but also a problem the United States ought to be able to solve, and thus a black mark on whoever happens to be U.S. president. It comes as well from the false equating of doing something visible and forceful with the solving of a problem.

There also are false equations between the use of military force and being tough, and between being tough and exercising leadership. There is the further luxury in opposition of being able to carp and criticize without the responsibility of implementing a policy that will actually improve matters. All of these patterns are accentuated at times of high emotional reaction to salient, jarring events, which is why they are especially apparent now in the wake of the terrorist attacks in Paris.

Mr. Obama, to his credit, is not adjusting his course in response to the current pressure to make the pseudo-tough move of significantly escalating U.S. military operations in Syria to battle the so-called Islamic State or ISIS, beyond the current carefully targeted airstrikes and the small Special Forces contingent that is already there. In particular, putting U.S. ground combat forces in Syria would be a bad idea for multiple reasons.

One reason is that it would not resolve the problem that it ostensibly would be intended to deal with, which is anti-Western terrorism conducted under the banner of ISIS. Whether an ISIS mini-state lives or dies in northeast Syria is not a critical variable that will determine whether radical and resourceful individuals and small groups determined to wreak havoc in Western cities will do so.

Maybe something will yet emerge from investigation of the Paris attacks to suggest that the fate of the mini-state is such a variable, but so far nothing has. So far the picture is one of a Belgium-based gang being responsible for the attack, with only vague connections to Syria and not necessarily to an ISIS decision-making structure. If there is any evidence (and an after-the-fact claim statement is not it) of an order from an ISIS high command in Raqqa to conduct this operation, we in the public have not been told about it.

An expanded U.S.-led military operation would play directly into narratives favored by ISIS and like-minded radicals, about Middle Eastern Muslims being the targets of forceful domination by a predominantly Christian West. The United States should stand side by side with France with regard to the latter's role as a victim of terrorism. The United States has no interest in identifying with France as a colonial overseer of Syria in the interwar years, or a France that

might be seen as trying to re-assert its dominance there. Problems of mistaken beliefs about a religious dimension of American intentions are made only worse by the abominable call from some presidential candidates to apply a religious test to decisions whether to admit refugees from Syria.

An expanded U.S.-led military expedition expands the radicalizing resentment, and the resulting recruiting ability of ISIS and extremist groups, from collateral damage from the military operations. This would be a result not only of a ground war but also a more indiscriminate air war. It certainly would be a result of following Ted Cruz's foolish advice that we should just not care about collateral damage.

The direct costs to American blood and treasure are what should be an obvious reason not to embark on something like a ground war in Syria, especially given the historical record of costs in such endeavors going well beyond what was originally projected.

James Jeffrey, who calls for just such a U.S. ground war in an op-ed in the *Washington Post*, assures us that this time would be different because, you see, an offensive in Syria would not be like those other messy endeavors but instead would be a "short," "crisp," "rapid takedown" of ISIS. We have heard similar assurances before. Reality has had a way of becoming much different from the images in the pre-war assurances. Shock and awe, anyone?

A reality in Syria is that rapidly taking down ISIS would leave the sort of chaos in that part of Syria that is itself fuel for radicalism, at least as long as the rest of the multifaceted Syrian war continues, and at least without a long foreign military occupation that would have huge direct costs as well as providing still more fuel for radicalizing resentment. Jeffrey is remarkably casual in brushing aside such considerations. All he has to say is that "while figuring out the 'day after' might be difficult and implementing any solutions costly," he thinks a continuation of ISIS would be worse.

President Obama spoke trenchant truths at his press conference in Turkey on Monday. In response to a series of questions that were all just reworded versions of "Gee, those Paris attacks were really awful, don't you think you should do something much different from what you have been doing so far about ISIS?"

Mr. Obama demonstrated much better understanding of the challenges involved than his "do something, anything" critics. In describing the nature of the terrorist threat we face, he explained, "It's not their sophistication or the particular weapon that they possess, but it is the ideology that they carry with them and their willingness to die."

He acknowledged that the success of ISIS in establishing and maintaining its so-called caliphate is indeed a factor in the terrorist equation, but mainly as matter of perceptions; it makes the group "more attractive to potential recruits."

Given that this is largely a problem of perceptions and beliefs and related emotions and resentment, it is important not to do things that only make matters worse along that dimension. In that regard, the President observed, "We play into the [ISIS] narrative when we act as if they're a state, and we use routine military tactics that are designed to fight a state that is attacking another state. That's not what's going on here."

As for launching a U.S.-led ground war, Mr. Obama accurately said, "We can retake territory. And as long as we leave our troops there, we can hold it, but that does not solve the underlying problem of eliminating the dynamics that are producing these kinds of violent extremist groups."

The President also indirectly commented on the false equations that so much of the carping in Washington involves. He will not do things that "somehow, in the abstract, make America look tough, or make me look tough." He is not interested, he said, "is posing or pursuing some notion of American leadership or America winning, or whatever other slogans they come up with that has no relationship to what is actually going to work to protect the American people."

One of the oft-voiced but invalid comments about the previous administration's signature military adventure is that the escalation, several years into the Iraq War, that became known as the "surge" was an "act of courage" on the part of President George W. Bush. It was nothing of the sort. It was a way to tamp down temporarily the surging violence in Iraq and to hold it at a less egregious level long enough to get out of Washington and bequeath the remaining mess, including all the still-unresolved political problems in Iraq, to the next administration.

President Obama, with just 14 months left in his presidency and getting all the political flak he is getting about ISIS, must feel tempted to do the same sort of thing now in Syria. Think about it: if he did so he would not only take wind out of the sails of hawkish critics but also be able to claim a place in history as the leader who smashed ISIS.

Of course, the terrorism and the chaos would still be there, as would an even messier and more complicated situation than before in Syria. But that would all be a problem for the next administration. We should be glad that President Obama is showing enough responsibility and true leadership not to do anything like that.

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.)

Neocons Make Rubio Their Favorite

With Sen. Marco Rubio surging in the polls closing the gap on Donald Trump and easily besting Hillary Clinton in some general-election match-ups the neocons have found their favorite candidate, a fresh face who would put them firmly back in the driver's seat of U.S. foreign policy, as JP Sottile explains.

By JP Sottile

"We'll be fine." That's what neoconservative scion William Kristol told Beltway insiders on MSNBC's "Morning Joe" when asked about the prospect of Donald Trump winning the GOP nomination.

Although he was initially warm to Trump's candidacy, Kristol quickly cooled during the "Summer of Trump" as the GOP's surprise frontrunner began piling up insults and, more importantly, as he began piling-on the disastrous foreign policy legacy of President George W. Bush. Trump's barrages against the Iraq War on the stump, on Sunday shows and, most entertainingly, on Twitter transformed the main foreign policy "achievement" of the neoconservative movement into a toxic campaign issue for the GOP's Establishment-friendly candidates.

To wit, Trump's relentless critique of the neocon-driven Iraq debacle wounded, perhaps mortally, the presidential prospects of "The Next Bush in Line" and, in so doing, jeopardized the most obvious governmental re-entry point for the restive cadre of neocon men and women currently languishing at the American Enterprise Institute. Many are also among Jeb Bush's closest foreign policy advisers.

With the Bush brand in jeopardy and Trump unwilling to either parrot long-standing GOP talking points or regurgitate their partially-digested tropes on foreign policy, things looked bleak for the Republican Party's bellicose backbenchers.

And its big-money benefactors have been left wanting ever since Wisconsin wunderkind Scott Walker ignominiously left the race with a whimper. Unlike the rest of the field, Troublesome Trump is not running for a big payday in the Sheldon Adelson primary. And Trump is not beholden to big-dollar bundlers

nor is he quietly coordinating with a well-funded Super PAC.

The prospect of a Republican nominee who is, whether for good or for ill, entirely free from traditional levers of influence led Kristol to go so far as to declare he'd support a third-party candidate if Trump became the standard bearer of a party the neoconservatives have dominated for three decades.

But the big GOP Establishment freak-out over the possibility of a string-less presidential nominee may be coming to an end. And Kristol, who is a notoriously flat-footed prognosticator, anticipated it a week before the punditocracy crowned Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Florida, the winner of the now-notorious CNBC "dumpster fire" debate and long before the Paris Attack refocused both the GOP race and the tragedy-obsessed media on national security.

This is Sen. Marco Rubio's best chance yet to turn his national security candidacy into the Establishment's main alternative to both Trump and to the Evangelical-fueled anomaly of Dr. Ben Carson. Rubio's recent move to the Establishment's pole position, complete with the public backing of billionaire Paul Singer and the Weekly's Standard's recent pronouncement that Jeb's flaccid candidacy was "dead", also presents the best opportunity for neoconservatives eager to retake control of U.S. foreign policy.

Ironically, Trump may have done them a favor. By burning Bush on his well-funded ties to SuperPAC puppet-masters and by relentlessly linking him with the worst memories of his brother's tenure, Trump cleared the way for the ultimate neoconservative dreamboat, Marco Rubio.

Which may be why, after reassuring everyone that "We'll be fine," the Conservative Cassandra told the "Morning Joe" scrum that a "Rubio-Fiorina or a Fiorina-Rubio ticket's going to win in November" and that "everyone should calm down."

Who Is 'We'?

When Bill Kristol says "we'll be fine," who is the "we" he's talking about? The country? The Republican Party?

Or is he talking specifically about the neoconservative brand and the much-maligned "shoot first, spend copiously and don't bother to ask questions later" approach to foreign policy that turned the "necon" name into pejorative term while also tarnishing the Republican Party and, in many ways, opening it up to outsiders and insurgents.

When pundits refer to Trump as an "outsider" who is running afoul of the "Establishment," in many ways the Establishment they are talking about is

the neoconservativeneoliberal alliance that has dominated the GOP since neoconservatives began exerting control over Ronald Reagan's often-brutal and occasionally-illegal policies in Central America and their neoliberal soul-mates ushered-in the era of low taxes, high spending and wholesale deregulation most people refer to as "Reaganomics."

Over time, this has opened up a schism in the Republican Party between this dominant force and so-called paleo-conservatives, assorted libertarians and lingering "country-club" moderates who've failed to regain traction in a party dominated by Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz and the ghost of Milton Friedman.

At the end of the grand neocon experiment, also known as "Bush-43," a potent combination of runaway spending, painful skepticism about the grinding Iraq War and, most directly, the hastily-engineered bailout of Wall Street blew that rift wide open. That's when the Tea Party rushed in and wrested control of the GOP agenda away from the Establishment.

And, like him or not, Donald Trump has, like the Tea Party before him, exploited that rift in the GOP to great effect, particularly on the issue of interventionism. Unlike most of the other candidates, Trump's evisceration of the Iran Nuke Deal stops short of "ripping it up" on "day one" of his presidency. Rather, he proclaims he'll be all over the Iranians like a cheap suit, pressing the enforcement of the deal like no other leader could.

And he's one of the few major political figures of either party to state bluntly that both Iraq *and* Libya would both be better off if the United States hadn't taken it upon itself to replace Saddam Hussein and Col. Gaddafi with swirling maelstroms of chaos. But even worse in the neocon universe is Trump's position on Syria and his approach to Vladimir Putin.

In a direct challenge to the neoconservative policy of relentless Middle Eastern fight-picking and their decades-long obsession with crippling Russia, a President Trump would, according to his repeated statements, prefer to let Russia and Iran have at it in the fight against the Islamic State. Trump is also willing to let Syrian President Bashar al-Assad stay in power if that would keep a lid on the beheading badguys.

And, in what has become one of the ultimate neocon "no-nos", Trump said he'd work to "get along" with Putin. To coin a phrase, "That's huge."

Trump's transgression of neoconservative orthodoxy set off warning bells at Commentary and its sirens have been ringing like a shrill car alarm ever since. Noah Rothman warned that if elected, Trump would start cutting some of his famous deals directly with "the devil." The devil is, of course, not in the

details. The devil is, according to neoconservatives, Vladimir Putin.

And Max “Don’t Call Me Jack” Boot summarily labeled Trump an “apologist for dictators,” while Rothman tarred Trump’s demonstrable claim that America was not, in fact, “safe” on 9/11 as tantamount to a dreaded “conspiracy theory.”

Meanwhile, The Weekly Standard has subtly jabbed Trump with petty guilt-by-association blurbs about Mike Tyson and Barack Obama even as the folks at Commentary have accused Trump of going “full Democrat.” But the irony is that Trump is not pulling Democratic ideas into the GOP race. Rather, Trump is leveraging a long-simmering feud between GOP insurgents, one that dates back to Pat Buchanan’s challenge to then-President George H.W. Bush in 1992, and the GOP Establishment.

The “outsiders” are now a hodge-podge of Tea Party activists, Dr. Ben Carson’s disgruntled Evangelicals and the traditional, cautious conservatism expressed by The American Conservative. It is also found in the lingering, almost rock-star appeal of longtime Libertarian representative and former presidential candidate Ron Paul.

Trump’s support, which often overlaps with the Tea Party, exemplifies its split on foreign policy. Like Trump, Tea Partiers are vociferous hawks, but also not necessarily interventionist. Rather, the Tea Party harbors a range of views from the knee-jerk militarism of Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Arkansas, to the surprisingly less enthusiastic stance of another presidential hopeful, Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas.

On “Meet the Press,” Cruz told Chuck Todd, “I don’t believe we should be engaged in nation building. I don’t believe we should be trying to transform foreign countries into democratic utopias, trying to turn Iraq into Switzerland. But I do think it is the job of our military to protect this country, to hunt down and kill jihadists who would murder us.”

Obviously, Americans have heard that one before and it’s entirely likely that the opportunistic Cruz is simply positioning himself to soak-up Trump’s base of support if and when he falters. But it’s notable that the astute political move to capture Trump’s support is to position yourself *in opposition to* knee-jerk interventionism and, therefore, to neoconservatism.

This lingering war-weariness and unease with empire is often derided by neoconservatives and, for that matter, by the foreign policy establishments of both parties, as “isolationism.” In many ways, the choice between “interventionism” and “isolationism” is Beltway Establishment’s ultimate litmus test. When politicians and pundits label a candidate as “isolationist” it’s

usually the kiss of death. Nothing is more dangerous than someone who threatens to derail 75 years of hegemonic momentum.

And unlike Trump, it is this test that Sen. Marco Rubio has purposefully and methodically passed since he announced his candidacy last April. He quickly followed up with a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations in May that hit all the interventionist sweet spots.

According to the Guardian, Rubio stopped short of appointing Uncle Sam as the “world’s policeman,” yet also wanted to “arm the Ukrainian military, pull back from negotiations with Iran, increase air strikes in Iraq, increase naval activity in the China Sea, [and] reverse the ‘normalization’ of relations with Cuba.”

Rubio further differentiated himself from Trump and “America Firsters” in a Weekly Standard feature article inauspiciously titled, “The Republican Obama.” In an interview for the story, Rubio stakes out a decidedly neoconservative position on the increasingly failed state of Libya. According to Rubio, the bloody chaos is not a result of the vacuum created by intervention, but because President Obama failed to “help quickly bring the civil war to a decisive conclusion.”

In other words, Obama’s intervention did not go far enough. And, as he told John McCormack, neither did the base of his own party: “When I called for us to be more aggressive in Libya, there were a lot of people in the base of my party who were against that,” he said in the interview. “I wouldn’t call it isolationism per se, but there was a growing movement in that direction in 2011, 2012, and 2013 that really didn’t end until ISIS beheaded two Americans.”

And if this stark contrast with Trump’s blistering critique of U.S. foreign policy and Cruz’s admonition against transforming other nations into “democratic utopias” doesn’t expose the fissure between the GOP’s insurgents and its increasingly discredited Establishment, Rubio’s stance on Russia and Vladimir Putin shows the extent to which Trump stands in direct contraposition to the neoconservative agenda and how qualified Rubio is to be its standard bearer.

In October, The Wall Street Journal detailed Rubio’s ever-hardening line on Putin which is, by subtle extension, an attack on Trump’s foreign policy bona fides. Rubio said, “We are barreling toward a second Cold War, and strong American leadership is the only force capable of ensuring that peace and security once again prevail,” and promised that “under my administration, there will be no pleading for meetings with Vladimir Putin. He will be treated as the gangster and thug that he is. And yes, I stand by that phrasing.”

The Standard Bearer

Remember the last time someone proposed a “New American Century”? That was The Project for a New American Century (PNAC), which formed in the late 1990s, and its roster read like a who’s who of neoconservative busybodies, defense industry enthusiasts and future functionaries of President George W. Bush’s Global War on Terror.

In September of 2000, the now-defunct “Project” infamously outlined its principles in a document titled “Rebuilding America’s Defenses.” In it, PNAC lamented the lagging military power of the United States in absence of the Cold War. It also detailed an expensive plan to militarize every level of existence from microbes to space and, most notoriously, said this massive “rebuilding” of “defenses” would be impossible to sell to the American people without a catalyzing event like “a new Pearl Harbor.”

Sadly, that catalyzing event came on 9/11. But the subsequent “project” for a new American century quickly turned into a burning tire around the neck of neoconservatives. It also opened a financial sinkhole in the U.S. budget and it visited a multigenerational disaster on the inhabitants of the Middle East.

For critics, PNAC’s big plan looked a lot like a smoking gun that demonstrated the premeditated opportunism of Administration insiders who quickly and effectively turned the Saudi-dominated attack on 9/11 into the wholesale destruction of a sovereign, bystander nation, Iraq, under patently false pretenses.

Yet, as if on cue, PNAC pulled their plug in 2006. That was just about the same time their much-ballyhooed “transformative” War on Iraq was devolving into a much-maligned quagmire. Thus, PNAC quietly disbanded just as public opinion finally turned on President Bush and after the neocons had engineered a global, full-spectrum war against an age-old asymmetrical tactic called terrorism.

Since then, and since the election of Barack Obama in 2008, the neoconservatives have been relegated mostly to the pundit peanut gallery. William Kristol, Bush functionary Dan Senor and PNAC signatory Robert Kagan rebooted PNAC as the much-less confrontationally named Foreign Policy Initiative.

Kagan’s wife, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Victoria Nuland, lorded over Ukraine’s chaotic shift away from neocon nemesis Vladimir Putin, but Kristol’s Emergency Committee for Israel failed to derail President Obama’s nuclear deal with another favorite target, the Islamic Republic of Iran.

And although Kristol seems to have found an acolyte in Tea Party-propelled Sen.

Tom Cotton, neocon pundit Max Boot recently lamented the failure of Congress to force through the kind of bloated defense budget that has long animated his fellow travelers.

The rub is that although the GOP is still reflexively pro-military, there is also a strong strain of budgetary squeamishness built into the anti-government appeal of the Tea Party. In part, that led to the infamous "budget sequester" deal with the President in 2011 that put caps on everything, including defense spending.

Since then, according to Boot, the defense budget hasn't been "serious", and by "serious" he means that an annual budget of nearly a trillion dollars (a total including ALL defense-related spending) simply isn't enough if America plans on seriously dealing with a panoply of "threats" from China, ISIS, Iran and Russia, among others.

Not coincidentally, all those "threats" also appear on Sen. Marco Rubio's laundry list of doom. Also not coincidentally, the boyish charmer with a Hispanic name, Cuban roots and a compelling immigrant back story is pitching his transformative candidacy with a catchy campaign slogan that sounds vaguely, perhaps even ominously familiar: "Marco Rubio: A New American Century."

Yes, Rubio has gone "Full-Neocon" and the echoes of grand designs past don't stop with his blatant campaign slogan. On Nov. 5, Rubio gave a sweeping speech in New Hampshire outlining his defense policies that could, according to an expert at the Cato Institute, add upwards of \$1 trillion dollars on top of current budget projections over the next decade.

It was that extra trillion dollars that GOP hopeful Sen. Rand Paul, R-Kentucky, attacked as "not conservative" in the FOX Business Debate. Rubio responded predictably by labeling Paul as an "isolationist."

But Sen. Paul highlighted the key difference between the Tea Party and Rubio, who is not a real conservative in the fiscal sense. Rather, Rubio is a neoconservative armed with global aspirations and a staggering military-industrial wish-list to boot. No doubt, it certainly is the type of "serious" defense budget that makes Max Boot dance. Rubio calls it his plan to "Restore Military Strength," which sounds an awful lot like PNAC's "Rebuilding America's Defenses."

Among the pricy "restorations" on Rubio's To-Do List:

–Reverse the current cuts and maintain the Marine Corps and the Army at their pre-9/11 end-strengths of 182,000 and 490,000 respectively.

–Immediately begin to increase the size of the Navy to a minimum of 323 ships by 2024.

–Build at least two attack submarines every year to preserve America’s undersea dominance amid intensifying naval competition.

–Develop and field the Long Range Strike Bomber capable of both conventional and nuclear missions to replace our current aging fleet of B-52, B-1, and B-2 bombers.

–Expand missile defense by speeding up deployment of interceptors in Europe, deploying a third site in the United States, and ensuring that advanced programs are adequately funded.

–Increase the Missile Defense Agency’s Research & Development budget and create a rapid-fielding office to focus on fielding directed energy weapons, railguns, UAV-enabled defenses, and other means to defeat a threat missile across its entire flight trajectory.

–Modernize the nuclear arsenal and stop the Obama administration’s proposed cuts to the nuclear arsenal.

–Improve anti-submarine capabilities; procure advanced air warfare capabilities; sustain our advantage in precision strike from land, air, and sea; and invest in electronic warfare capabilities.

–Reposture the tactical Air Force for increased presence in Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Northeast Asia.

–Build a “full spectrum” force able to maintain security simultaneously in Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

–Maintain the Army’s proficiency across the full spectrum of war in order to combat state actors, defeat non-state threats, and shape the security environment to America’s advantage.

This emphasis on “full-spectrum dominance” was exactly the thrust of the neoconservative agenda outlined in “Rebuilding America’s Defenses” and is, in essence, a *de facto* program for complete military dominance of the entire planet on the land, the sea, in space and, for the tech-enthusiastic Rubio, in cyberspace.

And it also puts him in good company with the neoconservative agenda outlined by the Executive branch backbenchers at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI).

In what cannot be written off as a mere coincidence, PNAC’s former executive

director Gary J. Schmitt is now at AEI and his name tops the header of AEI's new, daunting 87-page plan "To rebuild America's military." In addition to wanting to expand U.S. capabilities to be able to fight wars in **three** theaters simultaneously, the neoconservative's latest assessment details these "key points" of concern about America's military power:

–The current U.S. military force is too small, its equipment is too old, and it is not trained or ready for a large or long fight.

–The decline of U.S. military power has severe implications for security and prosperity not just in America but also in Europe, in East Asia, and especially across the greater Middle East.

–Defense planning for the next administration must take a long-term perspective, adopting a three-theater force construct, increasing military capacity, introducing new capabilities urgently, and increasing and sustaining defense budgets.

Not surprisingly, the issues highlighted in this latest neocon manifesto would all be resolved by Rubio's suspiciously simpatico wish list. Perhaps more troubling is that Rubio is also being supported by a secretive non-profit that is, for all intents and purposes, running a shadow campaign to get Rubio elected.

The Shadow Campaign

Amidst a dizzying array of heavily-funded SuperPACs, billionaire benefactors and the troubling news that nearly half of the cash poured into presidential campaign came from just 158 families, The Conservative Solutions Project (CSP) is quietly reshaping the already skewed campaign finance system.

"The Project" is a non-profit "social welfare" organization that has thus far raised \$15 million. There's nothing wrong with that. However, their novel idea of social welfare centers on a single-minded "project" to elect Sen. Marco Rubio as America's first truly neoconservative president.

Unlike Jeb Bush's much-discussed \$100+ million Right to Rise PAC, the Conservative Solutions Project is *not* a "SuperPAC." In post-Citizens United America, SuperPACs can raise and spend unlimited amount of cash, but also have to disclose the names of donors and the amounts of their donations. But, because CSP is officially registered as a "501(c)(4) social welfare organizations," it is able to keep the names and amounts of its financially unfettered donors completely secret.

Like SuperPACs, social welfare organizations cannot coordinate directly with a

candidate. But unlike SuperPACs, that shouldn't even be an issue because social welfare organizations are not supposed to advocate directly for political campaigns at all. Period.

The IRS states bluntly, "The promotion of social welfare does not include direct or indirect participation or intervention in political campaigns on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office." They can "engage in some political activities, so long as that is not its primary activity."

Yet, the Conservative Solutions Project has been the primary source of an "ad blitz" starring none other than Marco Rubio. And, according to the National Journal, that's quite literally "none other." S.V. D'Áite reported in late October that "every single one of the group's thousands of television ads, in fact, has featured Rubio" and it shouldn't come as a surprise since "its leader co-founded a political consulting firm with the manager of Rubio's presidential campaign."

Even more glaring is that "there have been no TV ads touting Rubio thus far other than those by Conservative Solutions Project."

Apparently, the impressive roster of GOP insiders at CSP believe there is no conflict in running \$3 million worth of ads touting Rubio's anti-Iran Nuke Deal stance. Nor is there any problem with the \$3 million ad-buy showing Rubio at the Iowa State Fair. Nor is there any problem with the \$2 million they've allocated to run even more Rubio-centric ads through this coming February, according to Associated Press.

But the campaign finance watchdogs at The Campaign Legal Center and Democracy 21 disagree. According to The Hill, both sent letters to the Justice Department requesting an investigation of CSP's specious interpretation of IRS code. And those requests come on the heels of an earlier complaint filed directly with the IRS by Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW). Noah Bookbinder, director of CREW, bluntly told the Associated Press that CSP's Rubio-centric media blitz "is an abuse of the nonprofit status."

Those allegations are simply not true, according to Conservative Solutions Project spokesperson Jeff Sadosky. He claims that CSP meets the IRS requirement of "promoting greater social welfare" by using its website to tout the accomplishments of a few other Republicans besides Marco Rubio.

Still, it's a strange interpretation of social welfare. But, then again, this is the sort of shameless spin you might expect from a person who is doing double-duty as spokesperson for both a faux non-profit *and* for a pro-Rubio super-PAC that is named, and this is not a joke, Conservative Solutions PAC.

So, Rubio's candidacy is not only being propelled by a SuperPAC that cannot officially coordinate with his campaign, his SuperPAC is working hand-in-glove with a secretly-funded social welfare organization that cannot legally be engaged in wholesale political activities.

The kicker is that their idea of "social welfare", beyond touting the "accomplishments" of various and sundry politicians, is an "Agenda for American Exceptionalism" that includes "reforming the tax code" (meaning tax cuts) and "shrinking and restructuring the federal government" while also "restoring our military and America's standing in the world to promote peace, freedom, and prosperity", all of which Rubio dutifully and robotically regurgitates in every speech and during each debate.

As noted previously, Rubio's PNAC-echoing national security plan is called "Restore Military Strength" which, of course, is reflected in CSP's "Agenda for American Exceptionalism."

While it is true that this could all be mere coincidence, what is not coincidental is, as Scott Bland reported in the National Journal last April, the incestuous relationships behind Rubio's bid for the White House. Bland revealed that CSP "commissioned a minutely detailed, 270-page political research book on early-state primary voters last year, and the report was prepared by a firm on Rubio's own political payroll."

That firm is Optimus Consulting and it has a remunerative relationship with Rubio's leadership PAC dating back to 2013. According to the National Journal, Rubio's leadership PAC, Reclaim America PAC, paid Optimus "\$200,000 in 2013 and 2014 for data and analytics consulting, according to federal campaign-finance disclosures."

Although Rubio's campaign cannot coordinate with Conservative Solutions PAC and *neither* his campaign *nor* the SuperPAC is allowed to sync-up activities with the Conservative Solutions Project because it is *forbidden* to do so by the IRS, the 270-page research book is not only available on Conservative Solutions Project's website, but Bland reported that it is "also on the Optimus website, where a description says it was produced 'in conjunction with the Conservative Solutions PAC,' though the report itself is branded with the nonprofit's name."

Thus far, the Conservative Solutions Project has raised somewhere around \$15 million dollars and spent about \$8 million on the Rubio ad blitz. Conservative Solutions PAC has, as of the last report in June, raised \$16 million and spent almost none of it.

That two-headed beast allows Rubio's federally regulated campaign to conserve

cash while it engages in a pitched battle on the airwaves with the SuperPAC and the campaign of the other Establishment option, Jeb Bush. Jeb's SuperPAC, which is not "officially" coordinating with his campaign, spent over \$17 million in ads to keep his flagging campaign afloat.

Of course, The Next Bush in Line also has a non-profit "social welfare" organization lingering in the shadows of the campaign. But Right to Rise Policy Solutions doesn't have the money nor is it poised to capture the biggest fish in the muddy waters of modern moneyed electioneering. That's what Rubio's supposedly uncoordinated "social welfare" group is about to do.

The Center for Responsive Politics tracked past giving and found that Sheldon Adelson and his wife "combined to be the biggest campaign donors of the 2012 cycle." Now, The Guardian reports that insiders believe the billionaire casino mogul is leaning toward spilling million of dollars of largesse into the Conservative Solutions Project. It stands to reason because Rubio reportedly calls upon Adelson regularly and CSP's pet project over the summer was a multimillion ad campaign trumpeting Sen. Rubio's hardline opposition to dealing with the dreaded mullahs of Iran.

And Adelson, who is closely connected to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, has in the decidedly anti-Iranian and reflexively pro-Israel Rubio a perfect recipient for his lavish financial attention. But Adelson is not alone. Florida billionaire and former Philadelphia Eagles owner Norman Braman is a long-time supporter willing to dip deep into his pocket for Rubio, and for his wife, who, the Washington Post reported, works part-time for the Braman family foundation. Like Adelson, U.S. policy toward Israel is one of Braman's primary concerns.

The same is true for billionaire Paul Singer, who previously teamed up with Adelson, billionaire hedge funder Seth Klarman and Home Depot founder Bernard Marcus to pump "a combined \$11.5 million to some of the biggest opponents of the Iran negotiations from 2011 through 2013, and pumped \$115 million into Republican Party super PACs in the 2012 and 2014 elections," according to Huffington Post.

A noted Wall Street wizard, Singer's recent endorsement burnishes Rubio's establishment credentials. But Singer has a long history of supporting the junior Senator from Florida. The Center for Responsive Politics lists Singer's hedge fund Elliott Management as the second most prolific giver to Rubio between 2009 and 2014 (right between Club for Growth and Goldman Sachs) and there's little doubt he will give copiously to Rubio's shadowy social welfare-SuperPAC hybrid.

Although Rubio is well-positioned to be the “rational” alternative to Trump and Carson, it also puts him squarely on the other side of the rift that has half of GOP voters supporting the two outsiders. And, like he did with Jeb Bush, Trump characterized Rubio ties to billionaires as puppet strings, calling him a “perfect little puppet” of Sheldon Adelson in one particularly lively tweet.

Strings Attached

This is Marco’s moment. Like the neoconservative brand he has franchised, Rubio has been waiting for the catalyzing event he can leverage into to transformative program to “rebuild” the world’s largest military and extend its already global-spanning reach.

Within hours of the Islamic State’s stunning attack on Paris, the ever-vigilant Rubio turned it into a profligate fundraising pitch and an anti-refugee addendum to his artful dodge on the one issue that Trump and newly-rising Ted Cruz can use against him, immigration.

But that’s the double-edged sword of Rubio’s Establishment bid, he’s a perfectly-crafted neoconservative Ken Doll who hits all their marks, but, at the same time, he’s an animatronic Establishment robot who reliably recites a well-worn message at least half of all GOP voters are currently rejecting out of hand.

This isn’t the 2000 election, when George W. Bush touted humility and a discomfort with nation building in the campaign before flipping the switch to a messianic mission after the “new Pearl Harbor” changed everything.

The GOP’s America Firster and Tea Party elements are distrustful of the Establishment and the nation as a whole is not keen on the neoconservative legacy. In perhaps the ultimate insult, noted lefty commentator Peter Beinart hilariously labeled neocon nemesis Vladimir Putin as the Russian equivalent of a neocon.

But the danger is that neoconservatives know that they are not popular and that’s why they’ve re-booted themselves into the Foreign Policy Initiative, into the recently launched John Hay Initiative (purposefully named after Secretary of State John Hay, the man behind America’s neo-colonial “Open Door” policy in China) and, by every indication, into the not-so-stealthy candidacy of Marco Rubio.

If there is such a thing as “truth” in political advertising, perhaps Rubio’s catchy campaign refrain says it all. His election looks like it’s their latest “project” for a “new American century.”

JP Sottile is a freelance journalist, radio co-host, documentary filmmaker and former broadcast news producer in Washington, D.C. He blogs at Newsvandal.com or you can follow him on Twitter, <http://twitter/newsvandal>.

CIA Whistleblower Kiriakou Honored

CIA officer John Kiriakou, the first U.S. official to confirm that waterboarding was used to torture “war on terror” detainees, then faced a retaliatory prosecution and 30 months in prison. Recognizing his sacrifice, the literary group PEN gave Kiriakou its First Amendment Award, observed ex-CIA analyst Ray McGovern.

By Ray McGovern

Editor’s Note: On Nov. 16, PEN Center USA, the West Coast branch of PEN International, gave former CIA officer John Kiriakou its First Amendment Award for his role in exposing waterboarding as torture used during President George W. Bush’s “war on terror.” Kiriakou then faced retaliation which led to a 30-month prison term for revealing classified information.

PEN International, a human rights and literary arts organization that promotes the written word and freedom of expression, asked former CIA analyst Ray McGovern to write an essay describing Kiriakou’s contribution and sacrifice. McGovern wrote:

John Kiriakou was just a name in the news until early 2012 when I got a call from Jesselyn Radack, mutual friend, whistleblower and intrepid attorney, who suggested I have lunch with him. John had been arrested in January and charged with unauthorized disclosure of classified information. Over lunch I learned how John had transitioned from highly decorated CIA officer to target of a government vendetta.

John, you see, had refused to be trained in how to torture. Even worse, he had the temerity to confirm publicly that our government was implementing a White House-approved program of torture techniques that turned out to be virtually identical to those listed in the Gestapo *Handbuch*.

Those of you who have seen the documentary *Silenced* already know of the key role Jesselyn Radack has been playing in defending whistleblowers like John Kiriakou. What? This is the first you have heard of *Silenced*? Well, there’s a subject for another discussion. Suffice it to note here that the powers-that-be in the distribution business simply chickened out, as they so often do.

Silenced chronicles behavior by faux lawyers at the Department of Justice that is anything but just or lawful. But, hey, who, in this day and age, wants to take on a notoriously vindictive DOJ? And so, with supreme irony, *Silenced* has been silenced.

The documentary shows in a poignant way how, after Jesselyn Radack's own ordeal at the hands of DOJ where she had been an adviser on legal ethics, she decided to devote the rest of her professional life to defending other whistle blowers. John Kiriakou and NSA whistleblower Thomas Drake are also featured all three playing their own roles.

The film presents an extraordinary example of how personal involvement with innocent suffering with injustice suffered first hand or by others can move the heart and the will so deeply that experience becomes catalyst for solidarity and action.

And healing. This came second nature to the community that immediately enfolded the Kiriakou family and helped John's wife Heather and their three young children 2, 7, and 9 at the time survive the ordeal of two years with dad stuck in prison. There were lots of us many no strangers to jail or prison for whistleblowing or nonviolent resistance and Code Pink, as usual, stepped up to share leadership.

Making an Example of John

At CIA's urging, DOJ was coming after John Kiriakou big time. And Heather, herself a widely respected CIA analyst, was let go. In effect, government retaliation created a situation of "two-less" replacing the "twofer" that had been serving with such distinction and integrity at CIA.

When John went to prison, I could identify albeit in a very small way with what it means to be away from wife and children for what seems like forever. Decades ago I had spent three months alone in the Soviet Union, away from my wife and three small children. I ached; I missed the hugs so much that I dreamed of finding a way to send my arms home in the diplomatic pouch.

It's harder still, of course, for wives. It always is. It was challenging enough for my wife to cope with our three children all of them under ten for three months. The mind boggles at what it must have been like for Heather with three still younger children.

And in the midst of all this, with zero warning, Heather's mother had a fatal heart attack. She had been an anchor against the wind for Heather and also a large part of her grandchildren's lives. With our own three daughters, I have witnessed first-hand the sanctity of the unique bond between mother and

daughter. Maybe only a woman can fully understand the depth of the challenge Heather faced with the sudden death of her treasured soul mate and with no husband nearby to lean on.

The “Dark Side”

John Kiriakou had become CIA’s Enemy No. 1 because he was the first insider to disclose that his former colleagues had been suborned into implementing a program of torture. Alarm bells had sounded at CIA: What if some of John’s former colleagues retrieved their consciences and followed his example? This could not be allowed to happen. Swift retribution was indicated.

The broader question, of course, is why had it been so easy to get CIA operatives to walk on Dick Cheney’s “Dark Side.” The context, of course, is 9/11. We keep hearing: “AFTER 9/11 EVERYTHING CHANGED.” Really? Everything? Did torture somehow slip out of the moral category it had long inhabited together with rape and slavery the category ethicists call “intrinsic evil?”

No way, said John Kiriakou. And thus began a cruel duel between two unequal adversaries: an exceedingly ruthless, vindictive government and a CIA professional determined not to violate his conscience.

What happened not only to many of John’s colleagues but also to Americans at large parallels what happened to Germans after their “9/11,” the burning of the Parliament building in Berlin on Feb. 27, 1933. Be afraid, they were told, be very afraid. It worked. With what a young German lawyer (later a writer with the pen-name Sebastian Haffner) living in Berlin at the time called “sheepish submissiveness,” Germans acquiesced in the most draconian, one might say “Patriot Act”-type, violations of their own Constitution. Haffner wrote:

“The sequence of events ... is wholly within the normal range of psychology, and it helps to explain the inexplicable. The only thing that is missing is what in animals is called ‘breeding.’ This, a solid inner kernel that cannot be shaken by external pressures and forces, something noble and steely, a reserve of pride, principle, and dignity to be drawn on in the hour of trial.”

Missing? Missing in many; anchored in Greek marble in John Kiriakou.

In exposing torture, John found himself in the company of other officials with integrity and guts like Gen. John Kimmons, head of U.S. Army Intelligence. On the very day (Sept. 6, 2006) that President George W. Bush publicly disclosed and bragged about the supposed effectiveness of what he called “an alternative set of procedures” for interrogation (then given the euphemism “enhanced interrogation techniques”), Kimmons arranged his own press conference at the Pentagon and said:

"I am absolutely convinced [that] no good intelligence is going to come from abusive practices. I think history tells us that. I think the empirical evidence of the last five years, hard years, tells us that."

Actually, Kimmons could have gone back 70 years not just five. It turns out that "enhanced interrogation techniques" is a literal translation of the Gestapo *Handbuch's* "Verschaerfte Vernehmung." And most of those Nazi "techniques" are the same ones blessed by the Bush-Cheney administration (with just a few further enhancements).

The award from PEN seems all the more appropriate inasmuch as John is now a writer and speaker of truth as well as a consultant on films and TV shows. And as many of us know only too well, he has his work cut out for him, whether writing about intelligence, torture, or how our prisons must be humanized.

The Challenge

Polling shows that most Americans continue to support brutal methods of interrogation, even in the wake of the Senate Intelligence Committee report made public last December that, using CIA's own cables, disproved claims that torture "worked." Trouble is, Americans don't read Senate reports; they watch TV and movies. That's how they "know" torture works. Think Fox TV's series "24." Think Columbia Pictures' "Zero Dark Thirty."

"Jack Bauer, the hero of "24," breaks captives' fingers to elicit information that "keeps us safe." And Americans applaud. Worse still, interrogators are misled and corrupted. Lt. Col. Diane Beaver, a military lawyer at Guantanamo, told British author Philippe Sands that Bauer "gave people lots of ideas. We saw '24' on cable ... It was hugely popular."

Sands wrote, "She [Beaver] believed the series contributed to an environment in which those in Guantanamo were encouraged to see themselves as being on the frontline and to go further than they otherwise might." Sands added that "24" also made it more difficult for those who objected to the abuse to stop it.

In fact, "24" was making torture appear so effective and even glamorous that U.S. military officials appealed to the creators of the show to tone down the torture scenes and give less play to the fiction that torture is "effective."

Some psychological research has shown that fiction is as effective as non-fiction at deeply moving people even when they know that what they are being moved by is a fictional account. People tend to be "transported" by a good story providing "truths" that appear just as powerful (or even more so) as those we encounter in the real world.

'Zero Dark Thirty'

Which brings us to "Zero Dark Thirty." And this, I believe, would be of particular interest to PEN. How in the world will John Kiriakou be able to open minds to the reality that the issue of morality aside torture does not "work," when so many have actually seen it "work" watching "Zero Dark Thirty," as well as "24?"

True, John Kiriakou has an abundance of experience and credibility. But what are these, stacked up against seeing torture work "with your own eyes?" John can cite the following facts until he is blue in the face, but the odds remain high against him.

On Dec. 21, 2012, two days after "Zero Dark Thirty" premiered, CIA's acting director took the unusual step of formally addressing agency employees with these words:

"[T]he film takes significant artistic license, while portraying itself as being historically accurate. ... [It] creates the strong impression that the enhanced interrogation techniques that were part of our former detention and interrogation program were the key to finding Bin Laden. That impression is false. ... I want you to remember that 'Zero Dark Thirty' is not a documentary."

Sen. John McCain, who was tortured as a POW in North Vietnam, said the film left him sick "because it's wrong."

Historian Karen J. Greenberg, Director of Fordham University Law School's Center for National Security, wrote this about the film's director: "Bigelow has bought in, hook, line, and sinker, to the ethos of the Bush administration and its apologists." Greenberg called the film "the perfect piece of propaganda, with all the appeal that naked brutality, fear, and revenge can bring."

And Peter Maass of *The Atlantic* wrote that the film "represents a troubling new frontier of government-embedded filmmaking." And Maass, too, is right.

Looking Forward

I'm not sure John Kiriakou would qualify for PEN Center USA's specific program for "Emerging Voices," but I am sure that, just the same, this year's First Amendment Awardee is a very important emerging voice both as writer and as a consultant on films and TV shows. Of this we can also be sure; nothing John gets involved in will glorify torture or otherwise bend to prevailing winds of dishonesty.

With the support of Heather and many others, he has already bucked a powerful

system arrayed against him. John Kiriakou will give no quarter in his passion for spreading truth around, no matter how many additional systemic hurdles he may be required to surmount.

Besides, he has “backing.” If you don’t believe me, download *Silenced*.

Ray McGovern was a CIA analyst for 27 years from the administration of John F. Kennedy to that of George H. W. Bush. He is co-founder of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS), which welcomed John Kiriakou into membership from federal prison.
