

Democrats in 'Group Think' Land

Exclusive: When Sunday's Democratic presidential debate turned to world affairs, the NBC correspondents and both Sen. Sanders and ex-Secretary Clinton fell in line behind "group thinks" about Syria, Iran and Russia that lack evidentiary support, writes Robert Parry.

By Robert Parry

A curious reality about Official Washington is that to have "credibility" you must accept the dominant "group thinks" whether they have any truth to them or not, a rule that applies to both the mainstream news media and the political world, even to people who deviate from the pack on other topics.

For instance, Sen. Bernie Sanders may proudly declare himself a "democratic socialist" far outside the acceptable Washington norm but he will still echo the typical propaganda about Syria, Russia, Iran and other "designated villains." Like other progressives who spend years in Washington, he gets what you might call "Senate-ized," adopting that institution's conventional wisdom about "enemies" even if he may differ on whether to bomb them or not.

That pattern goes in spades for former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and other consciously "centrist" politicians as well as media stars, like NBC's Andrea Mitchell and Lester Holt, who were the moderators of Sunday's Democratic presidential debate. They know what they know based on what "everybody who's important" says, regardless of the evidence or lack thereof.

So, you had Mitchell and Holt framing questions based on Official Washington's "group thinks" and Sanders and Clinton responding accordingly.

Regarding Iran, Sanders may have gone as far as would be considered safe in this political environment, welcoming the implementation of the agreement to restrain Iran's nuclear program but accepting the "group think" about Iran's "terrorism" and hesitant to call for resumption of diplomatic relations.

"Understanding that Iran's behavior in so many ways is something that we disagree with; their support of terrorism, the anti-American rhetoric that we're hearing from their leadership is something that is not acceptable," Sanders said. "Can I tell you that we should open an embassy in Tehran tomorrow? No, I don't think we should."

Blaming Iran

In her response, Clinton settled safely behind the Israeli-preferred position to

lambaste Iran for supposedly fomenting the trouble in the Middle East, though more objective observers might say that the U.S. government and its “allies” including Israel, Saudi Arabia and Turkey have wreaked much more regional havoc than Iran has.

“We have to go after them [the Iranians] on a lot of their other bad behavior in the region which is causing enormous problems in Syria, Yemen, Iraq and elsewhere,” Clinton said.

Yet, how exactly Iran is responsible for “enormous problems” across the region doesn’t get explained. Everybody just “knows” it to be true, since the claim is asserted by Israel’s right-wing government and repeated by U.S. pols and pundits endlessly.

Yet, in Iraq, the chaos was not caused by Iran, but by the U.S. government’s invasion in 2003, which then-Sen. Clinton supported (while Sen. Sanders opposed it). In Yemen, it is the Saudis and their Sunni coalition that created a humanitarian disaster by bombing the impoverished country after wildly exaggerating Iran’s support for Houthi rebels.

In Syria, the core reason for the bloodshed is not Iran, but decisions of the Bush-43 administration last decade and the Obama administration this decade to seek another “regime change,” ousting President Bashar al-Assad.

Supported by Turkey, Saudi Arabia and other Sunni powers, this U.S.-backed “covert” intervention instigated both political unrest and terrorist violence inside Syria, including arming jihadist forces such as Al Qaeda’s Nusra Front and its close ally, Ahrar al-Sham and to a lesser degree Al Qaeda’s spinoff, the Islamic State. [See Consortiumnews.com’s [“Hidden Origins of Syria’s Civil War.”](#)]

The desire of these Sunni powers – along with Israel and America’s neoconservatives – was to shatter the so-called “Shiite crescent” that they saw reaching from Iran through Iraq and Syria to Lebanon. Since Assad is an Alawite, a branch of Shiite Islam, he had to be removed even though he was regarded as the principal protector of Syria’s Christian, Shiite and Alawite minorities. [See Consortiumnews.com’s [“Did Money Seal Saudi-Israeli Alliance?”](#)]

However, while Israel and the Sunni powers get a pass for their role in the carnage, Iran is blamed for its assistance to the Syrian military in battling these jihadist groups. Official Washington’s version of this tragedy is that the culprits are Assad, the Iranians and now the Russians, who also intervened to help the Syrian government resist the jihadists, both the Islamic State and Al Qaeda’s various friends and associates. [See Consortiumnews.com’s [“Climbing into Bed with Al Qaeda.”](#)]

Blaming Assad

Official Washington also accepts as undeniably true that Assad is responsible for all 250,000 deaths in the Syrian civil war even those inflicted by the Sunni jihadists against the Syrian military and Syrian civilians a logic that would have accused President Abraham Lincoln of slaughtering all 750,000 or so people North and South who died in the U.S. Civil War.

The “group think” also holds that Assad was behind the sarin gas attack near Damascus on Aug. 21, 2013, despite growing evidence that it was a jihadist group, possibly with the help of Turkish intelligence, that staged the outrage as a provocation to draw the U.S. military into the conflict against Syria’s military by creating the appearance that Assad had crossed Obama’s “red line” on using chemical weapons.

Mitchell cited Assad’s presumed guilt in the sarin attack in asking Clinton: “Should the President have stuck to his red line once he drew it?”

Trying to defend President Obama in South Carolina where he is popular especially with the black community, Clinton dodged the implicit criticism of Obama but accepted Mitchell’s premise.

“I know from my own experience as Secretary of State that we were deeply worried about Assad’s forces using chemical weapons because it would have had not only a horrific effect on people in Syria, but it could very well have affected the surrounding states, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Turkey.

“If there is any blame to be spread around, it starts with the prime minister of Iraq, who sectarianized his military, setting Shia against Sunni. It is amplified by Assad, who has waged one of the bloodiest, most terrible attacks on his own people: 250,000-plus dead, millions fleeing. Causing this vacuum that has been filled unfortunately, by terrorist groups, including ISIS.”

Clinton’s account which ignores the central role that the U.S. invasion of Iraq and outside support for the jihadists in Syria played in creating ISIS represents a thoroughly twisted account of how the Mideast crisis evolved. But Sanders seconded Clinton’s recitation of the “group think” on Syria, saying:

“I agree with most of what she said. And we all know, no argument, the Secretary is absolutely right, Assad is a butcher of his own people, man using chemical weapons against his own people. This is beyond disgusting. But I think in terms of our priorities in the region, our first priority must be the destruction of ISIS. Our second priority must be getting rid of Assad, through some political settlement, working with Iran, working with Russia.” [See Consortiumnews.com’s [“A Blind Eye Toward Turkey’s Crimes.”](#)]

Sanders also repeated his talking point that Saudi Arabia and Qatar must “start putting some skin in the game” ignoring the fact that the Saudis and Qataris have been principal supporters of the Sunni jihadists inflicting much of the carnage in Syria. Those two rich countries have put plenty of “skin in the game” except it comes in the slaughter of Syrian Christians, Alawites, Shiites and other religious minorities.

Blaming Russia

NBC anchor Lester Holt then recited the “group think” about “Russian aggression” in Ukraine ignoring the U.S. role in instigating the Feb. 22, 2014 coup that overthrew elected President Viktor Yanukovich. Holt also asserted Moscow’s guilt in the July 17, 2014 shoot-down of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 despite the lack of any solid evidence to support that claim.

Holt asked: “Secretary Clinton, you famously handed Russia’s foreign minister a reset button in 2009. Since then, Russia has annexed Crimea, fomented a war in Ukraine, provided weapons that downed an airliner and launched operations, as we just did discuss, to support Assad in Syria. As president, would you hand Vladimir Putin a reset button?”

While noting some positive achievements from the Russian “reset” such as a new nuclear weapons treaty, help resupplying U.S. troops in Afghanistan and assistance in the nuclear deal with Iran, Clinton quickly returned to Official Washington’s bash-Putin imperative:

“When Putin came back in the fall of 2011, it was very clear he came back with a mission. And I began speaking out as soon as that happened because there were some fraudulent elections held, and Russians poured out into the streets to demand their freedom, and he cracked down. And in fact, accused me of fomenting it. So we now know that he has a mixed record to say the least and we have to figure out how to deal with him.

“And I know that he’s someone that you have to continually stand up to because, like many bullies, he is somebody who will take as much as he possibly can unless you do. And we need to get the Europeans to be more willing to stand up, I was pleased they put sanctions on after Crimea and eastern Ukraine and the downing of the airliner, but we’ve got to be more united in preventing Putin from taking a more aggressive stance in Europe and the Middle East.”

In such situations, with millions of Americans watching, no one in Official Washington would think to challenge the premises behind these “group thinks,” not even Bernie Sanders. No one would note that the U.S. government hasn’t provided a single verifiable fact to support its claims blaming Assad for the

sarin attack or Putin for the plane shoot-down. No one would dare question the absurdity of blaming Assad for every death in Syria's civil war or Putin for all the tensions in Ukraine. [See, for instance, Consortiumnews.com's "[MH-17's Unnecessary Mystery.](#)"]

Those dubious "group thinks" are simply accepted as true regardless of the absence of evidence or the presence of significant counter-evidence.

The two possibilities for such behavior are both scary: either these people, including prospective presidents, believe the propaganda or that they are so cynical and cowardly that they won't demand proof of serious charges that could lead the United States and the world into more war and devastation.

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

Toward a More Subtle US Foreign Policy

Largely because Israel's right-wing government now considers Iran the great enemy and has a fonder view of Saudi Arabia, U.S. politicians and media have followed that lead, decrying Iranians and tolerating Saudis, but such simplistic thinking does not serve American interests well, as ex-CIA analyst Paul R. Pillar explains.

By Paul R. Pillar

The dramatic and fast-moving events in U.S.-Iranian relations over the past few days underscore, among other lessons, the following two. One is that results matter. No matter how hard the naysayers have striven to say nay, they have offered no alternative to actual U.S. policy that could have yielded results as favorable.

And it's not as if there hasn't been ample experience to test what alternatives might have done. With regard to Iran's nuclear program, years of nothing but pressure and sanctions brought only years of an expanding program with ever more centrifuges spinning. It was only through engagement, negotiation and compromise that the most strenuous restrictions on, and monitoring of, a national nuclear program that have ever been negotiated were achieved.

As for Iranian-Americans who were unjustly imprisoned, they and perhaps others as well would have been imprisoned whether or not U.S.-Iranian relations were in a deep freeze. (A couple of the men just released by Iran had been arrested before the nuclear negotiations even began.) They were freed only because the relationship thawed.

As for the naval encounter in the Persian Gulf, despite the erroneous attempts by critics of the administration to depict as an Iranian provocation an incident that instead consisted of U.S. Navy craft making a still not fully explained incursion into Iranian territorial waters, it is hard to imagine an outcome as favorable as the one that ensued if there were not the diplomatic channel, established in the course of the nuclear negotiations, to achieve that outcome. Again, past experience strongly suggests that with a frozen relationship the outcome would have been worse.

A second major lesson concerns the mistake of treating relations with any country customarily labeled as an adversary as if the entire relationship were zero-sum, leading to policies that try to oppose the other country at every turn, no matter what that country is doing and no matter how what it is doing actually does or does not relate to U.S. interests.

This mistake has arisen regarding U.S. policies toward some other countries besides Iran. Joshua Kurlantzick of the Council on Foreign Relations makes a thoughtful argument in a recent article that the Obama administration has committed this mistake in its policy toward China, in which the administration's "Asia strategy has been to fear and combat nearly every move by China to flex its muscles."

The ill-advised nature of such a strategy is illustrated by the feckless U.S. attempt to dissuade other states from participating in the new China-initiated Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. A better strategy, says Kurlantzick, would be to save opposition to China for those issues on which Beijing's behavior really does run up against important U.S. interests, such as the unjustified Chinese attempt to stake vast territorial claims in the South China Sea.

On Iran, the corresponding mistake has been made not by the Obama administration but instead by its critics who believe that Iran ought to be opposed everywhere, all the time, no matter what it is doing, thus treating anything in Iran's interests as if it were by definition against U.S. interests.

Some of the chief underpinnings of this posture have to do with idiosyncrasies of current American politics: the influence of the right-wing Israeli government, which wants to keep Iran forever ostracized for reasons that do not correspond to U.S. interests; and the impulse in the Republican Party to oppose

anything Obama proposes.

Also underlying the posture, however, is a more general American tendency to view the outside world in black-and-white terms with a rigid division between foes and friends. The Obama administration has pushed back against these tendencies with its nuclear diplomacy on Iran, but the tendencies are so strong that the administration still has had to bow to some of the Iran-is-always-bad mindset as a way of husbanding its political capital and protecting its most important achievements.

The oppose-an-adversary-everywhere approach is harmful to U.S. interests in several respects, starting with the fostering of a mistaken view of exactly what those interests are. They are not really zero-sum vis-a-vis China, Iran or any other country. The first step in upholding U.S. interests is to have a clear and undistorted view of the interests themselves.

The zero-sum approach impedes fruitful cooperation with the other country in question. This means not only the big initiatives (such as the Shanghai Communiqué with China and the nuclear agreement with Iran) but much else besides. The Obama administration, despite being overeager to counterpunch Beijing in Asia, has gotten some useful cooperation from China on climate change and the negotiation of the Iran agreement.

But there is plenty more such cooperation that is needed; the handling of North Korea probably tops the list. With Iran, beyond nuclear matters the most prominent current area of shared interest where cooperation is important is opposition to ISIS and similar violent Sunni extremism.

The inclination to oppose the other state across the map gets the United States into costly and disadvantageous commitments. Kurlantzick mentions, for example, some questionable U.S. policies in Southeast Asia that stem from the inclination to oppose Chinese influence everywhere.

In the Middle East, the often-asserted and very incorrect theme that Iran is “destabilizing the region” and that its influence must be countered everywhere has led to such mistakes as U.S. support for the ineffective and destructive (and deplorable on humanitarian grounds) Saudi-led military campaign in Yemen.

Economic sanctions, as a favorite tool of those who want to take a uniformly negative approach to a country labeled as an adversary, have come to be treated as if they were a positive thing in their own right. It is as if schadenfreude were a U.S. national interest. It isn't.

The United States gains no benefit from economic weakness in Iran, China or elsewhere. (For a reminder, check what your stock portfolio has done since the

start of the year.) In important respects the United States has an interest in healthy economies in those and other places. And U.S.-imposed sanctions inflict direct harm on the United States itself.

Lost sight of long ago in many discussions in the United States about sanctions against Iran is that they are of no good to the United States at all except insofar as they shape Iranian motivations to do something such as agree to major restrictions on Iran's nuclear program.

The prisoner exchange needs to be seen in this light. The men released by the United States were charged with no offense other than violation of U.S.-imposed economic sanctions against Iran, and in particular the nuclear-related sanctions, which have served their purpose with implementation of the nuclear agreement and are no longer of use. In this respect what the United States gave up in the swap was minimal indeed.

The zero-sum approach of opposing everything the other country does fails to take account of internal political competition in that country. Such disregard of the other side's domestic politics tends to work to the disadvantage of U.S. objectives.

In this respect, the prisoner release is an important statement about the state of play of political contests inside the Iranian regime. Strong forces that for their own reasons resist a thawing of the relationship with the United States are still part of that regime.

Those hardline elements, which have largely had control of the Iranian judiciary, were responsible for the original incarceration of the prisoners who were freed. Release of those prisoners indicates that the more moderate and progressive elements in the regime, including President Rouhani, have gained enough influence and won enough internal arguments to bring about the release. Rouhani and his allies will be able to retain such influence only as long as they can demonstrate that cooperation with the United States rather than confrontation pays off for Iran.

If U.S. policy were to change in a direction that made it harder for the moderates to win such arguments, then we would see Iran taking more dual-national prisoners and releasing fewer of them.

Currently there does not appear to be a comparable internal political dynamic in China. Control and stifling of dissent seem to be watchwords of the regime under Xi Jinping. But perhaps someday, if political pressures in China catch up with economic change, the issue may be germane there, too. U.S. policy can matter, not in stoking counterrevolution but in helping to shape political evolution.

The black-and-white approach to foes and friends makes it seem easy to think about relationships that actually are complicated. And some primal urge gets satisfied by sticking it to someone we've decided we don't like. But that's a poor way to advance our own nation's interests.

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.)

Turning Change into Chaos

Early U.S. presidents warned that foreign entanglements could endanger the Republic, but it turns out that modern U.S. interventions are hazardous to the rest of the world as well, achieving neither democracy nor human rights, while spreading chaos and death, a tragic turn addressed by ex-CIA official Graham E. Fuller.

By Graham E. Fuller

A renowned Arab religious scholar in the Fourteenth Century, ibn Taymiyya, is sometimes quoted as saying, *Al-zulm afdal 'ala al-fawda*, "oppression is to be favored over anarchy."

Although ibn Taymiyya was no establishment figure in his time, this perspective was welcomed by all rulers since it provided explicit religious justification in support of arbitrary and often oppressive authority.

Maybe there's not a lot new here: all rulers at all times and all places like to wrap themselves in the robes of religious, ethnic or patriotic legitimacy in order to maintain power.

But there's something else: ibn Taymiyya lived in a period when the holocaust of the Mongol invasions was sweeping across Asia and into the Middle East sowing destruction. It was a time of fear, widespread violence and war, calling for political caution. Sound familiar?

Is this thought, then, the product of a political reactionary? Or does it represent a fundamental insight into basic human psychology? Which of us, when confronted with anarchy in the streets, possibly getting murdered or kidnapped while simply going out to buy a loaf of bread, might not prefer authoritarian

crackdown to unbridled chaos; where just staying alive is the best we can hope for in a precarious political and social environment?

Ask Iraqis who got liberated from Saddam Hussein, or Libyans liberated from Gaddafi. Or Syrians today. Might the ugliness of the earlier dictatorships not look better, where at least if you stayed totally out of politics your lives were fairly safe and predictable?

After all, when life, family, the social order and survival are at stake, our basic political values can get pretty rock-bottom conservative.

Sadly, these words from the Fourteenth Century Muslim world may be disturbingly relevant to today. It's part of a political debate that reverberates through all of human history.

At the level of states, great powers tend to prefer order, virtually any kind of order, to chaos in the world in which they operate. That's how dictators thrive and gain external support; even democratic states value foreign dictators who can keep the lid on.

The U.S. has rarely shrunk from supporting ugly dictators or regimes if it believed it to be "in the national interest." (Unless that specific regime happens to be directly anti-American in which case terror, destabilization, or overthrow is welcomed.)

The U.S. is not especially worse than other major powers in this respect, but its global reach means that it engages in this particular kind of hypocrisy more widely and frequently than most other states.

But the chaos that flowed out of the U.S. overthrow of Saddam in Iraq, Gaddafi in Libya, and efforts to overthrow Assad in Syria, has not only inflicted massive suffering on the populations of those countries, but has left Washington (and the European Union) worse off than before, and spawned ISIS out of Iraqi and Syrian turmoil.

President Obama wisely decided not to go that same route a fourth time in recently deciding that likely alternatives to Bashar al-Assad would be worse than Assad himself. (Obama's "liberal interventionist" advisors were not happy.)

So, is oppression more tolerable than anarchy? And for whom? It seems even European and American publics, hardly experiencing anything at home that could remotely be called anarchy, are still willing now to ratchet up the level of police, military and intelligence surveillance powers to avoid even the possibility of any kind of terror incident.

People will pay nearly any price if they believe it might make them safer. You don't have to be a Fourteenth Century Muslim cleric to make that observation. So what is the message here, then?

One message is that liberalism is a delicate flower. We are disinclined to be more generous, open, tolerant or broad-minded when conditions are dangerous. We see this clearly in Western politics today, in the U.S. presidential debates, or in the mood of European societies in the face of refugees from the Middle East and Africa. Multi-culturalism and tolerance become unwelcome words.

It's not just Muslims who think this way. It's Chinese as well who have gone through political, economic and social hell for half a century of communist experimentation before emerging into the present era of relative prosperity and order under a Chinese government that runs a tight ship.

Nobody wants to hear suggestions for an overthrow of the neo-communist order there. Don't rock the boat, let's cherish and preserve what we have painfully gained and work for political progress, if any, only through baby steps. Few will risk known stability in the hope of gaining some abstract and untested improvements.

Along similar lines, why don't Muslims call for huge overhaul of their interpretations of Islam in contemporary Middle Eastern states? When bullets are flying, calls for social and theological change is unthinkable; it's safer not to address such volatile issues.

These arguments about order are fundamental to the philosophic conservative vision, the true conservative vision and not the grotesque caricature of conservatism that has hijacked most of the Republican Party in the U.S. today.

In the end almost all of us embrace this conservative principle to some extent: don't rock the boat if you have a lot to lose. What we disagree about is how to interpret "rocking the boat" or "having a lot to lose." It's all a matter of degree. What risks will we take, what experiments will we undertake, for what putative gain?

I write these words with some trepidation since this conservative political philosophy has been exploited and used to justify atrocious policies on the part of all kinds of dictators around the world, as well as justifying unacceptable foreign policies of the U.S.

Looking at the world around us today, it looks like we are entering a new conservative age globally, driven by fear of chaos and the increasing spread of violence across so much of the world. Ibn Taymiyya would have recognized this phenomenon immediately.

Graham E. Fuller is a former senior CIA official, author of numerous books on the Muslim World; his latest book is "Breaking Faith: A novel of espionage and an American's crisis of conscience in Pakistan." (Amazon, Kindle)
www.grahamefuller.com

A Reminder about Comment Rules

From Editor Robert Parry: At Consortiumnews, we welcome substantive comments about our articles, but comments should avoid abusive language toward other commenters or our writers, racial or religious slurs (including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia), and allegations that are unsupported by facts.

If we notice violations of this comment policy, we will take down such comments. If readers spot such violations, they can bring them to our attention at consortnew@aol.com. Repeat offenders will be placed on a watch list requiring case-by-case approval of their comments.

Obviously, our preference is for commenters to show self-restraint and to make their observations in a respectful and thoughtful way. We have plenty of work to do without having to police the comment section.

Also, because of annoying SPAM, we have installed a SPAM filter that uses algorithms to detect SPAM. The filter does a good job at this, but sometimes catches legitimate comments by accident. During the day, we try to recover these comments, but please do not be upset if one of your comments suffers this fate.

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 December addressed the dangers of global warming, the false narratives of the Mideast conflicts, and America's chaotic presidential politics.

["Near Boiling Point on Global Warming"](#) by Nat Parry, Dec. 1, 2015

["The US-Russia Proxy War in Syria"](#) by Ray McGovern, Dec. 1, 2015

["Obama Taunts Putin over Syria"](#) by Sam Hussein, Dec. 2, 2015

["Obama Ignores Russian Terror Victims"](#) by Robert Parry, Dec. 2, 2015

["The West's Deadly Mideast Fantasies"](#) by Mike Lofgren, Dec. 2, 2015

["NATO Picks a New Fight with Russia"](#) by Jonathan Marshall, Dec. 3, 2015

["Who Wants to Weaponize Outer Space?"](#) by Sam Hussein, Dec. 4, 2015

["Learning to Love the 'Drone War'"](#) by John Hanrahan, Dec. 4, 2015

["Suffering from Global Warming First"](#) by Dennis Bernstein and Andrea Carmen, Dec. 5, 2015

["PBS Joins the MSM's Syria-Russia Bias"](#) by Rick Sterling, Dec. 5, 2015

["Obama's Credibility Crisis"](#) by Robert Parry, Dec. 6, 2015

["The Incredible Shrinking President"](#) by Daniel Lazare, Dec. 7, 2015

["Cruz Threatens to Nuke ISIS Targets"](#) by Robert Parry, Dec. 8, 2015

["The Terror from the Gun"](#) by Lawrence Davidson, Dec. 8, 2015

["Why Syria's Options Are So Bad"](#) by Ted Snider, Dec. 8, 2015

["A Day When Journalism Died"](#) by Robert Parry, Dec. 9, 2015

["Israel's Moral Erosion"](#) by Alon Ben-Meir, Dec. 10, 2015

["The Courage from Whistle-blowing"](#) by Ray McGovern, Dec. 11, 2015

["Chicago Police Adopt Israeli Tactics"](#) by Todd E. Pierce, Dec. 11, 2015

["Blocking Democracy as Syria's Solution"](#) by Robert Parry, Dec. 12, 2015

["How 'Obscure' Bureaucrats Cause Wars"](#) by Jonathan Marshall, Dec. 15, 2015

["Closing the Wrong Visa Loopholes"](#) by Georgianne Nienaber and Coleen Rowley, Dec. 15, 2015

["A Blind Eye Toward Turkey's Crimes"](#) by Robert Parry, Dec. 16, 2015

["The Danger After Putin"](#) by Gilbert Doctorow, Dec. 17, 2015

["Sam Parry Receives 'Gary Webb Award'."](#) Dec. 18, 2015

["America's Unpredictable Imbalance"](#) by Lawrence Davidson, Dec. 18, 2015

["Rethinking Donald Trump"](#) by Sam Hussein, Dec. 18, 2015

["Neocons Object to Syrian Democracy"](#) by Robert Parry, Dec. 19, 2015

["A GOP Split on Neocon Orthodoxy"](#) by James W. Carden, Dec. 19, 2015

["Challenging US Overseas Military Bases"](#) by Ann Wright, Dec. 19, 2015

["Trump Schools ABC-TV Host on Reality"](#) by Robert Parry, Dec. 21, 2015

["The Coming Saudi Crack-up?"](#) by Daniel Lazare, Dec. 22, 2015

["A Call for Proof on Syria-Sarin Attack"](#) by Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity, Dec. 22, 2015

["The Grimmer Story Behind 'Trumbo'"](#) by James DiEugenio, Dec. 24, 2015

["A Christmas Message of Peace"](#) by Gary G. Kohls, Dec. 24, 2015

["The Obsessive Putin-Bashing"](#) by Gilbert Doctorow, Dec. 26, 2015

["The Misinformation Mess"](#) by Robert Parry, Dec. 28, 2015

["One County's Global Warming Failure"](#) by Robert Parry, Dec. 29, 2015

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 PayPal Giving Fund account, which is

named "The Consortium for Independent Journalism").
